

The Man in the House of Being

A Story of Language and Being in the Bible

Second Edition



Antón Bousquet

One of the author's previous works, entitled *A (Hi)story of Language and Being in the Bible*, explored the relationship between man and language from the point of view of the biblical narrative, using linguistics and philosophy to analyze the way the ancient text describes the birth, the evolution, and the end of language. This analysis was used to produce a "meta-narrative," that is, a narrative that recounts the story of the metaphysical world opened up by language, following the metaphor crafted by Martin Heidegger that describes language as the "House of Being." In this previous work, the outline of this meta-narrative was presented in technical language, with its metaphorical elements intertwined with the language of philosophy, linguistics, and exegesis. The power of metaphors nonetheless lies in the fact that they appeal to the senses as much as to the mind. In the same manner, the meta-narrative can only shine when it is told in a language that is as close to the senses as possible: poetic language. The present work represents such a retelling of the story of language and being in the bible, as a prose story devoid of any technical language so that man can see himself as one of the dwellers of the House of Being that it depicts, and change his own relationship with language.

This story begins with the building of the House of Being by the first man. It then shows how the house evolves, both shaped by man and shaping him: how it is split into numerous houses as a result of man's arrogance; how new building techniques will radically change the houses' structure, and how man will discover the village formed by all the houses of being. Ultimately, he will travel and make these houses new homes, and the village will slowly be transformed into a city, before the end comes, and the purpose of language in man's destiny is revealed.

About the author:



Antón Bousquet is an independent researcher specialized in the philosophy of language, the philosophy of religion, and comparative cultural studies. He holds a Master's degree in Linguistics from the University of Grenoble III in France and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Intercultural Studies from Fugen Catholic University in Taiwan. A former teacher of French as a foreign language, he has worked in different parts of Europe, the Middle-East, and Asia.

Printed by:



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2018-2023

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ISBN: 9781719884235 (Paperback)

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A (Hi)story of Language and Being in the Bible – An Interpretation Based on Heidegger and Dürckheim (2018)

Printed by:



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AHLBB

Bousquet, Antón. *A (Hi)story of Language and Being in the Bible: An Interpretation Based on Heidegger and Dürckheim*. Koadig, 2018. Print.

TBA

Translation by the author.

GA 5

Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 5: Holzwege (1935–1946)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1977. Print.

GA 9

Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 9: Wegmarken (1919–1961)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1976. Print.

GA 65

Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge – Gedachtes Bd. 65: Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis) (1936–1938)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1989. Print.

GA 77

Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge – Gedachtes Bd. 77: Feldweg-Gespräche (1944/45)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1995. Print.

Ibid.^o / Ibid.^t

When several references to the same book follow each other, the reference to the original language edition is designated as “Ibid.^o” and the translation as “Ibid.^t”

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Introduction

Man is what he is now because of the power of tradition. His capacity to pass on his intellectual and practical knowledge is one of the defining features of his kind, one that explains the extent of man's rule over the earth and over the creatures that populate it. By passing on his knowledge as a tradition that goes through time and space, each individual man is now able to stand on the shoulders of the countless generations of men who preceded him, thereby enjoying the sight of a horizon larger than the one of his forefathers. The sheer amount of accumulated knowledge received as an inheritance from his forefathers may nonetheless end up being perceived as an unbearable burden to some, a burden that would hinder man's "progress." Our heritage may indeed limit us, but only if it is wrongly perceived: as an idol that should not be tempered with rather than as the foundation upon which each generation is called to add a contribution that will one day itself become a basis for the work of its children.

In order to properly wield the power of tradition, one must see both its value and its limitations. One must cherish and honor the efforts of his ancestors, but one must also be ready to go where the men of the past never stepped foot or even be ready to contradict them when they are found to have strayed from the path of truth. There nonetheless is a stumbling block on the path of man's "progress" that is far more dangerous than the idolization of tradition, one

that is clothed with a silk cloak, making it appear innocuous and pure, and its name is: certainty. This redoubtable foe of the inquiring mind is one that has ensnared mankind since the dawn of history, conquering the hearts of men across the globe and across the ages, affecting both religious and secular men, philosophers and warriors, infants and old men.

Certainty has already won large parts of the world of men. It is deeply encroached within man's innermost possession: his language. The words that he uses often represent condensed expressions of certainties, with which he builds his world by manipulating and combining them with others, whose origin is lost in the distant past. The most mysterious and unfathomable concepts have, through the sway that certainty holds over our languages, now become unquestionable, appearing obvious and plain. The word "God" has perhaps done more damage to man's search for the divine than any other, concealing what it was meant to reveal and offering mankind a pale mask to behold in its stead, one that eclipses the sun's blinding radiance. This mask is nonetheless necessary: it represents the fruit of the reflection of our distant forefathers, who did their best to communicate their own experience of the divine to us. It is a steppingstone upon which we must by ourselves build further in order to gain a clearer view of what it points to. As told by the German philosopher Martin Heidegger:

Only from the truth of Being can the essence of the holy be thought. Only from the essence of the holy is the essence of divinity to be thought. Only the light of the essence of divinity can it be thought or said what the word "God" is to signify. Or should we not first be able to hear and understand all these words carefully if we are to be permitted as men, that is, as ek-sistent creatures, to experience a relation of

God to man?¹

What is true of the word “God” is also true concerning others: “man,” “language,” “being.” Their separation into separate “things” allows us to *grasp* them and to manipulate them as the building blocks of our *worlds*, which are the way we represent what we feel with our senses or imagine with our mind. It also leads us to think that we are grasping the things that are represented, whereas we only grasp the representation itself, a representation that may be fallible or even simply false, a mirage leading us away from the truth of our sensory experiences.

The representations offered to us by our ancestors nevertheless remain the main tool at our disposal for the investigation of the creation. Our “understanding” is entirely based on this heritage whose origin is unknown to us. Once this fact is recognized and embraced, then can man elevate himself toward the skies with his roots deeply secured into the earth. It is not fortuitous that one of the foundation stones of the intellectual history of Western civilization, Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, opens with the words: Πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει, all men by nature desire to know.² Man is called to “comprehend,” to “fathom” all that surrounds him, leading him to seek the divine and to accomplish the greatest of things, but this

¹ Heidegger, Martin. *Pathmarks*. Cambridge University Press, 1998: 267. Print. (Letter on “Humanism”); Original German: “Erst aus der Wahrheit des Seins läßt sich das Wesen des Heiligen denken. Erst aus dem Wesen des Heiligen ist das Wesen von Gottheit zu denken. Erst im Lichte des Wesens von Gottheit kann gedacht und gesagt werden, was das Wort »Gott« nennen soll. Oder müssen wir nicht erst diese Worte alle sorgsam verstehen und hören können, wenn wir als Menschen, das heißt als eksistente Wesen, einen Bezug des Gottes zum Menschen sollen erfahren dürfen? Wie soll denn der Mensch der gegenwärtigen,” from: GA 9:351. (Brief über den »Humanismus«)

² TBA. Original Greek from: Henderson, Jeffrey. “ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics*.” *Loeb Classical Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 4 Dec. 2016. (Emphasis added).

calling can also lead him to forget his own place and his own nature. The account of the Fall of mankind in the biblical tradition is a perfect example of such a temptation, during which the first couple transgressed the only commandment that they received: to refrain from eating the fruits of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.³ Man must therefore always be mindful of the dangers of his quest for knowledge, but this should not weaken his resoluteness to seek to know what matters to him: the divine, the creation, himself, his own destiny. Knowing what he must do, man must then find the way to answer the calling of his destiny.

As the French hermeneut Paul Ricoeur told us: “There is no understanding of one’s self that is not mediated by signs, symbols, and texts.”⁴ This is not only true concerning self-understanding: the same could perfectly be said of any kind of understanding. Our entire world, that is, the way our mind looks at the creation, is entirely built with signs, with representations. Man’s quest will thus necessarily be mediated by signs, without which man’s entire world would crumble and without which the meaning of the quest itself would be lost to him.

Therefore, man must learn to keep a balanced relationship with the signs that form the building blocks of his world. He must embrace them, cherish them, and see their value. They are the gifts of his forefathers, who strove to fashion them so that they would illuminate the path in front of him and his descendants. This path is one that is cleared by man’s mind, and one that will lead him to the appropriation of his essential being, what he must become. As told by Heidegger:

Thoughtful meditation on this that is unique

³ Cf. Gen 3.

⁴ TBA. Original French: “il n’est pas de compréhension de soi qui ne soit médiatisée par des signes, des symboles et des textes,” from: Ricoeur, Paul. *Essais d’hermeneutique Vol. 2, Du texte à l’action*. Paris: Points essais, 1998: 29. Print.

(namely, the truth of beyng) can only be a path on which what is unable to be thought in advance is nevertheless thought, i.e., a path on which there begins the transformation of the relation of the human being to the truth of beyng.⁵

This meditation is at first confined to the world of signs. These signs form the basis of man's mindfulness and of his grasp of the universe. The signs are nonetheless not perfect. They are only a walking stick helping him on his long journey, supporting his mind and body, but he must learn to use the support offered by this stick in order to reach a higher ground, as with a ladder.

The walking stick of tradition therefore is the most natural support of the man treading on the path. It is the foundation upon which he can edify something according to his inspiration and according to the efforts that he puts in this endeavor. The present work represents an example of such a construction. It is an original work, but one that primarily rests upon the biblical tradition, which has been the main source of Western culture for more than two millennia. It is nonetheless not a work of "biblical interpretation," as it does not claim to reveal the meaning of the Christian Scriptures. It rather is intended as a spiritual reading of the biblical narrative, a small step forward on the path, one that is not only rooted in the Christian tradition, but also, and perhaps mainly, in the philosophical and poetical tradition spearheaded by various thinkers, themselves belonging to different times and different cultures: Martin Heidegger, Karlfried Graf von Durckheim,

⁵ Heidegger, Martin, Richard Rojcewicz, and Daniela Vallega-Neu. *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*. Indiana University Press, 2012: 329. Print.; Original German: "Und die denkerische Besinnung auf dies Einzige: die Wahrheit des Seyns, kann nur ein Pfad sein, auf dem das Unvordenkliche dennoch gedacht, d. h. die Verwandlung des Bezugs des Menschen zur Wahrheit des Seyns angefangen wird," from: GA 65: 415.

Hölderlin, Heraclitus and others. The goal is here not to “understand” the Bible, but rather to *use* it as the raw matter from which the threefold relationship between man, his world mediated by signs (that is: his language) and the divine can be unfolded.

Tradition is a solid and precious foundation, but man’s fate is to go beyond it, even trampling it so as to get closer to the divine, as the source and essence of his being. The final encounter is not to be found in the tradition of the past but rather on top of the constructions of the future, constructions that will not be constrained by the limitation of the old foundations. In the words of the German philosopher: “The god appears uniquely in the abyssal ‘space’ of beyng itself. All previous ‘creeds,’ ‘churches,’ and the like cannot in the least become the essential preparation for the encounter of god and the human being in the midst of beyng.”⁶ The present work will therefore take a great distance from the tradition at its source so that it can favor a transformation of man’s relationship with the divine, with his own being, and also prepare him to the encounter with what Heidegger called “the last god,”⁷ who is waiting for us to reach our destin-ation:

How few know that the god awaits the grounding of the truth of beyng and thus awaits the leap of the human being into Da-sein ! It seems instead that the human being would, and would have to, await the god.⁸

⁶ Ibid^{t.}: 330; Original German: “. . . weder im »persönlichen« noch im »massenweisen« »Erlebnis« der Gott noch erscheint, sondern einzig in dem abgründigen »Raum« des Seyns selbst. Alle bisherigen »Kulte« und »Kirchen« und solches überhaupt kann nicht die wesentliche Bereitung des Zusammenstoßes des Gottes und des Menschen in der Mitte des Seyns werden,” from: GA 65: 416.

⁷ Ibid^{t.}: 319; Original German: “Der letzte Gott” GA 65: 403

⁸ Ibid^{t.}: 330; Original German: “Wie wenige wissen davon, daß der Gott wartet auf die Gründung der Wahrheit des Seyns und somit auf den Einsprung des Menschen in das Da-sein. Statt dessen scheint

The following story intends to pave the way for this leap. It is also itself directly based on a previous work, which laid the groundwork that made the telling of this story possible, a work entitled: *A (Hi)story of Language and Being in the Bible — An Interpretation Based on Heidegger and Dürckheim*.⁹ This preparatory foundation was multifaceted, exploring the biblical narrative of language and being first from an exegetical point of view and then developing a technical, philosophical, and linguistic interpretation of this narrative before finally offering a sketch of the **story** of the “world” of the narrative, that is, the story of man’s relationship with his language and his being. As suggested by the title of this work, it was as much a history as a story: it fundamentally was a technical and “metaphysical” study, one that endeavored to be deeply anchored in modern philosophical and linguistic scholarship as much as in biblical hermeneutics. This anchorage was a necessary step for the unveiling of the story itself. A *technical* approach indeed helps in the organization and formalization of abstract concepts. It allows us to construct metaphysical works that show us aspects of the universe that we cannot directly comprehend with our sensory experiences of our environment.

Such an abstraction nevertheless also alienates us from our experience of the **earth**, that is, our experience of the materiality in which we are thrown and with which our own body is built. If the product of our intellectual work remains purely meta-physical, disconnected from our senses, it will not induce any fundamental transformation of our relationship with our own being and with the divine. The metaphysical “world” in which man lives must be kept close to the “earth” upon which he stands. The surface join-

es so, als müßte und würde der Mensch auf den Gott warten.” GA 65: 417

⁹Bousquet, Antón. *A (Hi)story of Language and Being in the Bible: An Interpretation Based on Heidegger and Dürckheim*. Koadig, 2018. Print.

ing and separating earth and world is the privileged *locus* where man may get closer to his own nature and closer to his origin.

The surface separating earth and world is the seat of the strife between these two realms of nature. It is the place where man is called to edify the world upon the earth, making it grow more and more distant from its origin, but also where he is called to deepen the roots of the world into the earth, preserving a certain harmony between the two. The surest way to bring back a world that has grown too remote from the earth is to transform one's own language, casting away an overly abstract terminology to favor words that are well-known to all: the words that are related to our most basic sensory experiences. The language of the senses is the language of **poetry**, and a return to the poetic is a key that can allow man to use the products of his intellectual work to enrich the range of his experience of the phenomenon, paving the way for the aforementioned "leap."¹⁰ This is why the (hi)story of man's relationship with his language and his being must not only be told as a "technical" study but also, once the technical has provided a sure basis for its telling, must be told in poetic language, in the form of a story. The previous work did the former and the present one intends to do the latter, telling the story of the world in a purely poetic form, entirely devoid of technical language, keeping the reader on the surface between earth and world, where the two can hardly be distinguished, as it is the place where the leap is more easily performed.

The starting point of the story of language and being is a simple *meta-phor*, that is, a carrying toward the earth of something abstract, something remote from our direct experiences. This *meta-phor* was first used by Heidegger: language is the **house of being**¹¹. Language is not a tool

¹⁰ For a more detailed examination of the nature and purpose of the poetic, see: AHLBB §1.1–1.3.

¹¹ Heidegger, Martin, and David Farrell Krell. *Basic Writings*.

that we use, but rather the place that we dwell in and that allows us to *be*. The story of the man in the house of being is the story of man's relationship with language, with being, and with the divine at their source. It will here be told using the biblical narrative as its basis, as it provides a precise vision of the entirety of man, from his origin until his end, one that is rooted in tradition and incorporates a series of insights concerning the place that language occupies in man's destiny.

The biblical tradition, and the story itself, are only means to a precise end: the leap, the appropriation of man's essential being. It is meant to lead to a consciousness of the need for a radical transformation of our relationship with our own house of being, our language, and for a rebuilding of our world in accordance with this transformation. Then only will man begin to see his own destin-ation:

When the gods call the earth, and when in the call a world echoes and thus the call resonates as the Da-sein of the human being, then language exists as historical, as the word that grounds history.¹²

The first step is always the hardest, but once man starts to walk and to focus on the horizon, the vision of the journey ahead gives him strength and no fear can ever take hold of him. He will advance, patiently, until he will see whereto he must leap.

New York: HarperCollins, 1993: 217. Print. (Letter on humanism); Original German: "das Haus des Seins," from: GA 9: 313.

¹² Heidegger, Martin, Richard Rojcewicz, and Daniela Vallega-Neu. *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*. Indiana University Press, 2012: 401. Print.; Original German: "Wenn die Götter die Erde rufen und im Ruf eine Welt widerhallt und so der Ruf anklingt als Da-sein des Menschen, dann ist Sprache als geschichtliches, Geschichte gründendes Wort," from: GA 65: 510.

Chapter 1

Genesis

Gen
1:1

In the beginning of this story, there were no “things:” no earth, no heavens, no man. What *is* nonetheless already *was*, without form nor order, a harmony unseen and unheard. Then, came the first creation: the **skies**, the expanse that will allow the other expanses to emerge from itself. A divine clearing, tearing up the fabric of being to allow it to retreat and stand out of itself. The skies are the space where movement can take place, the ether that gives freedom and allows the will to be condensed into action. The skies are what is ever permanent, but also what is ever-changing, relentlessly flowing, ignoring the pleas of those caught in its flow. What the skies will contain will forever remain prisoner of its winds, but the captives will always enjoy the freedom that this space offers, as a drop of rain dancing on a falling leaf, pulled downwards before it touches the earth and ultimately returns to the ocean from which it came.

After the skies, comes the **earth**. Not merely the globe of lava whose hardened crust shelters man before he returns to it, but rather what fills the skies, what emerges from within the expanse that itself emerged from the divine, as a plant giving the seeds necessary for its own per-

petuation. The earth is what dances with the skies, what stands against them, the two allowing each other to be seen. The earth occupies the skies, taking them over, but the skies contain the earth, taking it in its flow and eroding it through the force of the winds and the course of the seasons.

The skies and the earth are nonetheless *no-thing*. Nothing-ness holds sway because “things” cannot appear on the naked earth, nor in the clear skies, as in perfect continuity and harmony, the divine, the skies, and the earth together form a whole, whose nature is to conceal itself, and which cannot nor needs to be cut out into parts, into “things” separate from the whole.

The skies begot the earth, and now the earth also becomes the source of a new generation from within itself. This generation occurs with the words: “let there be light”. The first words mark the creation of a world. The thundering voice reverberates throughout the earth and propagates in the skies. It clears a new expanse, one contained in them and yet separate from them: a **world** where things can be created, and where the creation can itself be seen. The light that accompanies the world bathes the whole creation, making each one of its corners visible, with light serving as a carrier of visions. Gen 1:3

The first words were carried across the skies, but they were made of earth, extracted from it and shaped into an appropriate form. These are the first building blocks of the world, and with their manufacture, the oneness of the creation finds itself shattered. As a sheet of glass struck with a diamond sword, the universe is now already broken in two: the light on the one hand, and what is not the light on the other. The foundation stone of the world has now been laid upon the earth, marking the end of the reign of no-thing-ness. But for now, no-one is there to dwell in this world, and no-one is there to see the creation through it. The building blocks of the world are indeed translucent

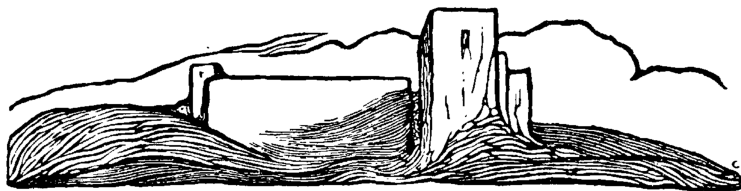


Figure 1.1: *Foundation.*

windows opened toward a particular “thing,” an aspect of the creation, distinguished from the rest of the whole, but the light going through these blocks has yet to be seen.

Gen 1:6–9 The burgeoning of the earth then begins, as the land is separated from the waters and the appearance of the celestial bodies marks the beginning of the seasons. The light causes the plants to flourish, plants that are themselves the source of their own perpetuation and propagation, elevating the earth toward the skies, as if called by the light to reach out toward what lies beyond. The winds blow over the surface of the earth, as a heavenly embrace, while the earth grows the green arms that allow it to feel the warmth of the sun and to receive the water of life from the clouds.

Countless creatures roam the earth, fill the seas, and fly in the skies, their eyes turned toward the east and the west, the north, and the south. They are destined to occupy the entirety of its surface, circling the globe to appropriate the land. Each one of them plays a part and is necessary in order for the whole to *be*. The skies can only be seen from the earth, and both earth and skies can only be seen from the world. Only by retreating from a place, stepping back and taking distance from it, can one see its nature. The world is nonetheless almost empty, having yet to be built. Therefore, the earth, the skies, and divine being are left unseen, as they are one. Something distinct from them must thus be created in order for them to shine and be seen: something that will gather the earth, the skies, the

world, and the divine, something coming out them and yet retreating from them. Only then can the meaning of the creation be sought and found.

On the skin of the earth, the soil forming the surface separating it from the skies, a faint movement appears. From the red clay watered by the heavens, something slowly emerges. Fingers are piercing through the surface, taking hold of a thick lump of oily dust so as to extract a body from the entrails of the earth. A creature is being born, delivered out of the womb in which it was formed, departing from its source and already heading toward its destiny. This creature is the first man, Adam.

Gen
2:7

Man is the red-colored, blood-filled creature that stands between the blue sky and the green earth, representing their union and an emanation of the divine brilliance. His body is then insufflated with the breath of life, the winds that make him able to elevate himself away from the earth, his two feet serving as anchors plunged deeply into the soil, thereby allowing his whole body to point toward the heavens, as a demonstration of his unique nature, distinguishing him from the other creatures that roam the earth and fly through the skies.

Standing straight, his head facing upward and his eyes wide opened, the first man is overwhelmed by the light of the luminaries that occupy the skies. Having yet to grow accustomed to the brightness of the creation, he struggles to discern anything. All that he sees is the brightness itself, but once the creation begins to appear in front of him, he is unnerved by the sight of his surroundings, even though he has yet to see any “thing.” Man is indeed born on the naked earth, but he has yet to dis-cover the world. For now, his eyes are shown the universe, but he does not have any grasp of its nature. He is like the other beasts wandering upon the earth, caught in the flow of its growth, under the skies. His will has yet to be awakened, and he has yet to find a vessel into which it could be poured.

Man is one with the creation, and because of this, he remains blind to it: he is blind to the earth, to the skies, to the divine, and also to his own nature. On the naked earth, he has no shelter where he could retreat from the overwhelming power of the elements, from the onslaught of the winds, of the hail, or of the snow. His skin is parched by the sun, but there is no warmth, no cold, no pain, no joy, and this for a simple reason: there is no “thing” on the naked earth, under the clear blue sky.

Gen
2:8

Man can nonetheless begin to enter in a relationship with the creation, of which he is a part, and into which he is thrown. The magnificence of the luxuriant garden in which he sees the days go by escapes him, for now, but he is slowly getting acquainted with every one of its aspects. His bare feet trampling on the grass wet from the dew of the heavens, he ventures into the garden, touching the rocks, hearing the chirping of the birds, and eating of the low hanging fruits that appear to be offered to him personally by the trees, whose branches are always extended toward him, as the hands of the earth feeding the child born out of its womb.

One day, as he searches for his sustenance, the first man sees a tree that stands out from the others because of its imposing nature. It is filled with splendid fruits that he assumes will be as sweet to his palate as they are pleasing to his eyes. As he draws near to its trunk, he suddenly hears a thundering roar that shakes him to his bones. This growl from the skies instinctively causes him to stand back and to refrain from touching the tree or eating its fruits. In awe before the force of the heavens, he instinctively associates his nearness to the tree with the detonation that pierced through his ears. He does not understand why, but his body has now been imparted a respect and a fear of this forbidden place. The roar entered his flesh and his bones, and as a sheep whose muteness does not preclude it from perceiving the admonitions of the shepherd, the man perceives the

command, before he even knows what a command is.

Gen
2:17

Man is then endowed with the gift of creation. On the soil of the garden, he finds the tools that will soon allow him to build his own world: a hammer and a chisel. Intrigued by the strangeness of these objects, he picks them up with his hands, still unaware of their potential use. Led by the winds that blow throughout the heavens above, the man is brought to the foundation of the world, where the first words, the first building-blocks of the world were fashioned by the divine. The animals roaming the earth are then brought in front of him and he is given the task of fashioning representations of them, using the tool found in his hands and the earth under his feet. Like sand brought into the heart of a blazing furnace, the earth that is brought to the foundation of the world appears as molten glass. Red and soft like the soil itself, it nonetheless begins to differ from it, showing the unique transformation it is subjected to by being brought to the world: it now lets the light that fills the skies pass through it, shaping this light according to the shape of the block of earth, a shape imparted by the man wielding the tools of the creator.

Gen
2:19–
20

When the translucent block has been given its final form, it stands in front of the creature it represents, hiding certain aspects of its nature but nonetheless revealing it to man for the first time as a “thing,” distinct from others, something that stands out from the oneness of the creation. A caricature of the infinite complexity of the universe thereby begins to appear, inside man’s world. Cut off from the rest of the creation, this “thing” can be grasped and manipulated by the first man, contrary to the whole, which he can see but nonetheless cannot fathom.

One by one, other creatures are then brought to Adam, parading in front of him so as to serve as models for the crafting of new blocks and for the edification of the world. As the blocks are slowly piled up upon the foundation built on the naked earth, the man feels compelled to start to or-

ganize them, to array them according to his inspiration. He observes them with great care, and with some perplexity, trying to figure out a way to make their assembly pleasing to his eyes. The blocks are therefore arrayed according to different sorts of similarities in shape or representation. They are positioned according to relations of opposition, dependency, or resemblance of aspect or nature.

Soon, as the hands of man place his creations one onto the other, the disorderly pile of blocks gives place to a neatly organized structure. The man carefully aligns each element, mindful not to leave any gap between them, as they are pushed against one another, beginning to form a wall.

The wall of light that is being constructed by the first man increasingly stands between him and the divine creation. The thickness of the translucent blocks dims the blinding light coming from the skies and reflected on the earth, and the man therefore ceases to be dazzled by the glaring brightness of the creation. Through the partially built wall, he begins to see the nature of his surroundings. He now sees the creatures that paraded in front of him, as individual “things” that have a unique place in the universe and enter in a relationship with others, as represented by the structure of the wall. With each new block that he fashions and places on top of the wall, the first man unveils a new “thing” that is part of the earth and the skies. Not sparing any effort, nor wasting too much time with introspections, he simply passes the days and the nights diligently working for the furthering of his own creation, this building that begins to emerge and is illuminated by the luminaries that silently shine down upon it.

The first man’s building skills are improving rapidly as more and more “things” are represented by his hands. The blocks are soon so numerous that he struggles to find a place to put them, making them part of a coherent whole that has now reached monumental proportions. Growing next to

the vegetation that flourishes over all the face of the earth, the construction of the first man shares certain aspects of the sprouting of life initiated by the divine. Contrary to “nature,” however, this construction does not arise by itself or from itself¹. It rather is the product of man’s will, a will whose birth marks the appearance of a new force, one that is able to oppose the natural sprouting of the earth, able to resist the flow of nature.

As the pile of blocks grows larger and its structure becomes increasingly refined, man’s horizon becomes almost entirely filled with the vision of what he created from the earth. Cooled down by the breeze blowing in the skies, each blazing mass taken from the earth bit by bit rigidifies and becomes a glossy, translucent window opened toward the universe, offering man the sight of a precise “thing.” Surrounded by these blocks, he relentlessly continues the work assigned to him, what he feels to be his duty, without realizing that he will soon be completely encompassed by his own creations. The windows opened toward the universe give him an increasingly comprehensive vision of it, but with each new block standing in front of man’s eyes, his direct link with the earth and skies is weakened. He gains a form of understanding, but he slowly loses sight. Everything that he sees is mediated by walls that surround him and that now fill his horizon. As the man puts the last blocks in place, the last rays of light coming directly from the great luminary hung in the heavens are quenched, entering the block and then being transformed and dimmed before they are finally given to man to behold. Man is now shut off from the earth and the skies. He still sees them, but only through the lens of the building blocks of what now forms his shelter.

What was built by the man, the space in which he is now confined, will now be his **world**. He can now create,

¹ This is the concept of “nature” as described by the Chinese word 自然 [zì rán].

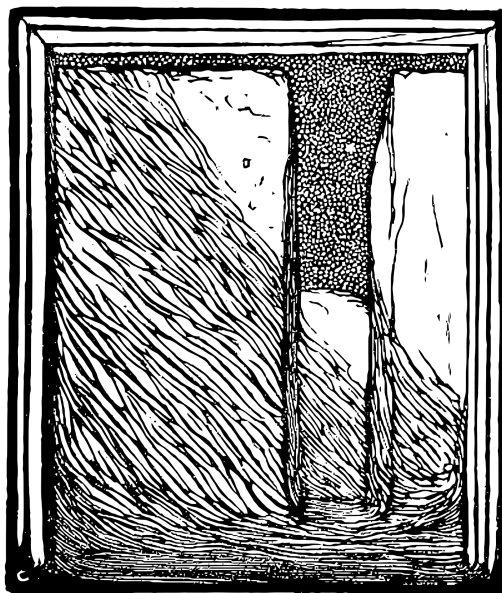


Figure 1.2: *The skies behind the house.*

fashion, move, and destroy this world that he builds and now inhabits. He is no longer sleeping on the naked soil, on the surface separating the earth from the skies, where he was at the mercy of both. The fruit of his will, the product of the work of his hands opened up a refuge where he can withdraw himself so as to observe the universe and attempt to grasp it.

Man's dwelling nonetheless offers him more than a mere image of what lies beyond its walls. The world sheltered by the house is built upon the earth, under the skies, but it also opens up and clears a space distinct from them, one where man can find himself, and where he can let the gift of the will grow more refined, more precise. The gift, and the will at its source, are also manifestations of something deeper: the fact that man's dwelling is a place where he can pull back from the divine at the source of the earth and the skies, the source of his own being. Before, man was a

creature among countless others, letting himself be carried away by the flow of nature, one with the whole of the creation. Now that he has entered his shelter, he **stands out** from the flow and stands away from the divine. What he has built, following the guidance he received, is more than an earthly structure: it is a **house**, a clearing within the forest of the creation, an open space that is built upon the earth, under the skies, and yet stands out from both.

The sun and the moon, the skies and the seas, birds and cattle, all are now “things,” part of man’s world and part of his house. He can now not only see them as “things,” but also manipulate their representations, organizing and restructuring his world as he sees fit, following his inspiration. His body no longer knows the soft embrace of the soil upon which he once slumbered, and he is no longer woken up by the warmth of the sun shining upon his freezing body, wet by the morning dew. He now spends his days working under the translucent dome of his house, and his nights on its hard concrete foundation. Entranced by his new power, the ability to build and transform his own world, the loss of his direct contact with the oneness of the creation goes unnoticed by the son of the earth. His mother sees the departure of the creature it birthed onto the surface, giving it to the skies so that it could live a life of its own, but having severed the link with his origin, the man does not weep his loss. His eyes are now fully focused on his world, and his hands are only busy with a single task: the further edification of the house.

Man’s house gathers the earth, the skies, the divine, and man within itself, bringing all the light of the creation within its walls so as to enlighten his world, filling his eyes with a view of the whole from which he has retreated. The building of the house is nonetheless only the first step in a long walk that will take man to his destination, the place that he is meant to reach. A second step will soon be taken, one that will radically transform this creature that dwells



Figure 1.3: *The ego.*

in a world made by its own hands.

As the first man continues to cut out the universe into a myriad of things, perfecting the architecture of his home, he soon comes to realize that something has been forgotten, a “thing” so obvious that it failed to catch the eye of the builder of the world. He sees his earthly body, the hands in front of him, which are connected to his arm, and which themselves are prolonged to his chest, his head, and his own eyes. The worker is then struck by the realization that the hands that are building the house representing the whole creation have yet to find a place within the house of being. They have yet to be represented.

Looking at the translucent blocks forming the wall in front of him, which channel the light of the sun into the house but also faintly reflect the content of man’s dwelling, the man begins to see his own image. What now for the first time appears to him is not only his hands and his arms but rather his whole body, laid bare on the glossy surface of the wall, offering itself to be seen by anyone who would enter this world.

Astonished, even jolted by this sudden appearance of himself inside his home, the first man is soon eager to fashion a block according to his own image. His hands are trembling, and the tools that they wield are shaking, being rattled against the raw block that is being fashioned by the artist, betraying the anguish caused by this experience. He looks at his own image, as he looked at the other creatures

that paraded in front of him, fastidiously shaping the earth to re-create himself, from the very matter out of which his body was made. Unaware of the profound implications of this creation, the first man effectively initiates the birth of his kind into the world, following his own birth into the air of the skies, out of the womb of the earth. He had no part to play in his birth out of the earth, but he is now directly responsible for his own birth into the world.

When his work of art is complete, the man then gently inserts the new block inside one of the walls of the house and puts it in relation with the rest of the world. He ceases to simply be the builder of the world: he is now both its builder and a part of it. This event, no matter how insignificant it may appear, nonetheless radically transforms the house, man, and their relationship. The birth of man into the world marks the emergence of his *ego*, making him something more than the other creatures roaming the earth. By seeing himself inside the world, man is now able to see his place in the whole of the creation. By peering into this block, which is both a window and a mirror, reflecting his own image, man can begin to **re-flect**. He can contemplate himself, contemplate the role that he is currently playing in the creation and the one that he is meant to play in it.

By forging his own *ego*, the man ceases to be an animal and he becomes a human being, a creature that has been given the gift of re-flection, able to think about itself and about the nature of being itself. This human nature would nonetheless never be possible outside of his house, which not only allows him to get a grasp of the universe into which he is thrown, but also allows him to ponder his own nature. As a consequence of the fabrication of the *ego*, the house also becomes more than a mere shelter from the dazzling light of the sun, the harshness of the winds of the skies, or the cold of the watery soil under his feet. It now becomes a **house of being**, man's home, a place that allows him

to elevate himself above all the other creatures so that he can edify a world honoring the creation, a world standing out from the oneness that lies beyond and yet one that is nonetheless devoted to its celebration.

The house of being dwelt in by man will now be more than a shelter: it will be a part of himself, an inseparable component of his nature, as are the eyes through which he sees the universe and the hands with which he builds up the world. He will continue to shape the house, but he will also be shaped by it, as his own image inside the world will be reflected throughout the house, and affect the world as a whole.

As the man wanders around his dwelling, his gaze nonchalantly passing over the myriad of things composing the creation and over his own portrait, he notices something more, something visible in the vicinity of the representation of himself. His eyes piercing through the faint reflections on the surface on which he can see his face, captive of the world, he discerns the infinite depth of the power of representation of his home, he sees an image of himself seeing himself and the endless subsequent reflections showing that even though the house is bounded by the earth and the skies, the world, on the other hand, knows no frontier.

The house has no boundaries, but it is through boundaries that things can be seen. Contrast brings sight: it lightens the path that man is meant to follow; it gives him a direction. As the man is working for the edification of his world, peering through the walls of the house of being and looking for new “things” that could serve as the models for the fashioning of new blocks, his attention is brought back to the middle of the garden in which he had his first encounters with the earth and the skies. In the midst of the verdant flora that abounds in every corner of the sumptuous garden, the tree of knowledge of good and evil majestically stands, towering over all the things around it. Bewildered by this wondrous sight, the man then begins

to remember his previous life, the time before he built the house of being.

Among the distant memories flashing before his eyes, a particular experience comes to his mind. A distress reemerges from the depth of his self. His muscles are tensed and his mind more alert, as if he sensed a threat, the presence of a danger in front of which he would be powerless. His own bones remember the imprint left by the voice of the heavens, the deafening cry of the skies that he heard as he approached the magnificent tree and extended his arms to seize one of the succulent fruits hanging from its branches. At the time, the man quickly stepped away from the tree, perceiving that this space was off-limits to him, even though he had no grasp of the nature or the origin of the growl that shook him to his core. But now, reflecting back on this experience, his mind is suddenly yearning to represent this encounter so that he can finally begin to investigate its significance, with the help of the power given to him by his dwelling.

Drawing out a voluminous lump of matter with his bare hands from the soil at his feet, the man then seizes the hammer and the chisel, the tools of the builder, so as to bring the delimitation between the lawful and the unlawful, good and evil, the sacred and the profane to the house of being and the world of man. Inspired by the depth of the impression left on his body by the thundering voice, the man feels compelled to choose the most prominent place within his dwelling for his new creation. Shaping the earth according to his memory, he diligently delimitates a sacred space in the heart of the house, and builds an **altar** that consecrates the inviolability of the tree at the center of the garden while honoring the voice from the heavens.

When the construction of the altar is complete, the new structure reveals itself significantly different than the other parts of the house. The altar is built around a hearth whose light pierces through the blocks of the sacred structure so

as to cast both light and shadows upon the walls of the house of being. Through this illumination of the man's humble abode by the sacred, his world is now cleaved in two. The light shines upon what is good or lawful, while a shadow is cast upon what is unlawful or evil. For now, at least, the shadow is considerably small, only covering a single block: the one showing the eating of the fruit of the majestic tree, but this is enough to make man realize the nature, the origin, and the purpose of the thundering voice. He finally sees the nature of the prohibition, and he can begin to grasp what the consequences of its violation would be. In awe before the product of his own hands, which represents the sacred, the divine that is brought into his world, the man silently prostrates himself, instinctively honoring the holy.

Gen 2:21–22 While the man slumbered at the feet of the altar, exhausted from the daunting task that he just completed and in which he put all his will and all his might, a counterpart to the first man is then formed, something coming out of himself and yet also distinct from him. As the earth was born out of the skies, and as man was born out of the depth of the earth, something is now being born out of the chest of man: a woman, who will now form the other half of his kind.

The birth of the first woman, upon the earth and into the world, therefore brings on another birth: the one of mankind, which will sprout from the union of the two creatures, leading to the creation of all the men and women who will be born onto the earth. For now, the first pair is alone within the walls of the house of being, enjoying the privacy and security of their home, undisturbed and without worries. This peaceful state of mind, however, will not last...

Another creature, already present in the garden, sneakily enters the abode of mankind. It advances toward its innermost parts, observing the work of man and how it stands

out from the rest of the creation, but without letting itself be seen by the builder and master of the house, who may be wary of the uninvited intruder, whose intentions have yet to be revealed. Seeing the man from afar, who is standing still near the shining altar that occupies the center of the edifice, the visitor knows that, as the builder of this world, the first man would not be an easy target to deceive. It thus swerves toward another part of the house, which is now a vast and refined structure, and it approaches the place where the woman can be seen casually discovering the world built by her companion.

The intruder then begins a conversation with the woman. Gen 3:1 It inquires concerning the meaning of the light shining out of the altar beside which the first man stands, far from them, a light that separates the world into two distinct parts: the world of light and the world of shadows. The first woman, astonished by the unexpected arrival of this visitor, which is the first creature that she ever saw inside her home besides the first man, is intrigued by the question. She naturally is familiar with the altar itself, which thrones in the midst of the house. It is the hearth giving light to her dwelling from the inside, and what provides its inhabitants with a guidance, showing them that they are meant to walk the path of light and to avoid the path of shadows, which will only lead them to a certain death, that is, to a vanishing from the house of being, and thus also from being itself.

The malevolent creature planted the seeds of doubt and watered the woman's *ego* in order to push her to violate the sacred space. It fashioned another altar offering the woman a different picture of light and shadows overlaid on the walls of her home. In the vision, she sees herself as the center of the world, all-mighty and all-knowing, master not only of the house of being, but also of the creation as a whole. Intoxicated by this sight, she begins to convince herself that the altar presented to her by her companion is groundless.

It is built on the clouds of deception, and therefore the appropriation of the sacred precinct would pose no threat to their own being.

Seduced by the glimpse of a pleasant future in which she would be elevated above all things, the woman does not pay any attention to the foundation of the structure built by the visitor. She prefers the shaky altar that is a delight to her eyes to the plainer and cruder one fashioned by the man, one which is, on the other hand, deeply rooted in the earth, having been formed as a faithful image of the thundering roar that resonated throughout the heavens.

Gen
3:6

Emboldened by the encouragements of the visitor and elated by the rapturous sight induced by its construction, the woman then takes the first step into the shadows of the world, thereby nullifying the distinction between the sacred and profane parts of the house of being. Entering the darkness of the world, she also violates the sacred space of the earthly garden, the place where the majestic tree towers over all the creatures. The woman ventured deep into the darkest corner of the house, and she is now blind to the wisdom of the light of the world. Rejecting the guidance of the light, she seizes one of the fruits hanging on the lowest branch of the tree, and she begins to taste her succulent and yet forbidden harvest.

The woman then hands over the fruit to the first man, who is as a result also brought into the darkness within the house. The fate of mankind is now sealed as a result of this decision. This time, there were no warning signs, no thundering voice shaking their bodies and their souls as they approached the sacred location. They both profaned the only sacred parts of the earth and the world, and the woman soon realizes that she was deceived by the visitor who is now nowhere to be found. The dark corner of the house did not conceal the key to an omniscience of the creation, nor did it hide wonders previously denied to her kind. The only thing that is revealed from inside the sacred

space is her own powerlessness in the face of the divine. The lowliness of mankind now appears in plain sight of all the creation.

The voice of the heavens nonetheless has not disappeared. It did not resound to warn the woman as it once warned her companion while he lived on the naked earth, perhaps because they were both now dwellers of the house of being, and could therefore perfectly see what would be brought on by their disobedience, but the voice will now be heard to proclaim their fate, to the whole creation, and to the ages to come.

The roar of the skies then begins to shake the house of being. The rattling of its building-blocks echoes on the walls, and the world is transformed by the winds that engulf man's shelter. Flashing in front of their eyes, the couple sees a vision of what their life will now be, a life of hardships and toil, contrasting with the carefree life in the garden. Death now also enters the house of being, occupying a prominent place of man's world, and forming the horizon of human life. Non-being enters the house of being, offering man a chance to realize the preciousness of what he has been granted.

Gen
3:16–
19

A cold wind then blows upon the earth. Man will now feel the force of the skies, which from now on will erode his body, and thereby also weaken his world. The lifespan of man is now counted, and his house, which is built upon the earth, can crumble as soon as his body returns to the earth and to the oneness from which it came. This is the time of the **twilight** of life and death, when the light of man's eternal nature begins to dim.

The twilight is an extra-ordinary time, one of reflection and introspection, when life and death, eternity and transience are placed face to face, indistinguishable from each other. Here, the first couple is given sight of what they had, of what they have lost, and of what will now be their lot.

The house of being offered them a place to retreat from the earth, allowing them to perceive the nature of their previous life. The twilight of life and death marks their entry into mortal life, allowing them to glimpse their past eternity but also opening the possibility of a revelation of the nature of their own being, as they are now confronted with the absolute certainty of their death, a future fading away of their own being.

Gen 3:23–24 They will now be taken away from the garden where they lived for the major part of their life and be brought to the east, the land of the dusk. Their house will be transplanted to a new part of the earth, thus affecting its foundations and its larger architecture, which are all grounded in the soil. As a reflection of the harsh nature of their new land, new things will now enter their world: pain, toil, hunger, thirst, cold, and heat.

Standing on a new land but still enjoying the safety of his home, the man then contemplates his mistakes. Facing the finitude of his own being, following the intrusion of the winds of death within his dwelling, he begins to perceive how great a gift he has been given. He now clearly sees that the house of being that he dwells in, and the world it opens up, offer him more than a shelter from the overwhelming power of the skies and the earth. What the world offers him firstly is a place to retreat from the earth. During his life on the naked earth, he was one with it, a barely protruding piece of earth coming out from the soil, his chest nourished with fresh air by the winds blowing through the skies. As he built and dwelt in the house of being, he slowly became a link between world and earth. The house offered him a space where he could retreat from the earth, and thereby finally break free from its oneness, which prevented him from being a “thing” standing out by itself, distinct from the all-encompassing oneness of the creation.

It is now limpid in his eyes: the man has been granted permission to dwell in the house of being so that he could

see the earth and the skies through the building blocks of the world. Only through the walls of the house, standing out from the earth, can he truly begin to perceive its nature. The quality and precision of this vision of the earth offered by the world nonetheless depends on his own capacity to build a world that is not only pleasing to the eyes, but that is also *true*, grounded in the depth of the earth itself. He begins to see that he will not only have to toil the earth in order to find sustenance for his body: he will also have to continue to build and to refine the world so as to feed his eyes with a knowledge of the creation, a knowledge that will lit the path to his essential being, to what he must become in order to accomplish his own destiny.

The building of the world, he knows it, will be a strife. To wage the strife of earth and world will now be the focus of his life so that he will avoid the mistake that he committed in the garden and will instead constantly rely on a world grounded in the truth of the earth. In order to progress on the path, he needs a sure ground, the tangible simplicity of the earth, but he also knows that he can only see the earth through the windows of the world, and that he is therefore called to unceasingly work to ground each part of his world into the soil upon which his house of being is built.

His tools in his hands, the chisel and the hammer that he kept with him during his migration to the east, the man begins to mend the wounds of his world, carefully tending the altar whose neglect led them to this path of hardships. The man nonetheless has not grown bitter as a result of this experience. He appreciates the wisdom he gained from his straying from the path of light, and he now stands in awe in the face of death, contemplating the vision of his own end, the day when he will depart from the house of being and return to the place from which he came, the great womb of the earth.

The man then continues his work of edification of the

house of being. His creation grows and becomes more sophisticated, a more detailed depiction of the creation beyond the walls. Its foundations are also increasingly strengthened, extended into the depths of the soil below. He strives to keep the tension between earth and world, standing out from the oneness, the divine, in order to make it shine within the house. He wrestles against the flow of nature, using the tools at his disposal to build a world standing in contrast with the earth, but the destination of his long walk on the path of his destiny has yet to be revealed to him. He has left the naked earth and been given the chance to live in the world, from which he can behold the land where he previously lived. Nevertheless, there is more to be seen...

...But will he look beyond?

Chapter 2

Babel

Once death entered the world of the first man and woman, both felt the need to unite their flesh so as to conceive children who would continue the work they started: the tilling of the earth and the edification of the world. They thereby allowed mankind to remain above the surface of the earth, and allowed the house of being to stand and to withstand the onslaught of the skies.

Facing the day of their return to the dust, the first parents passed on the charge of the edification of the house of being to their descendants. These children supported its blocks and its structure with their bare hands, preventing its crumbling and its disappearance, before themselves passing it on to their own offspring. As generations passed, parts of the house were expanded, while others withered away when they were left unsupported. The work of time also affected the dwelling of mankind, with the winds blowing on its walls and eroding them with the flow of the seasons. Its population quickly grew to become as numerous as the stars in the sky, but the world that followed the emergence of death was still lacking the very thing that caused this event: a desire to discern good from evil.

The first altar, the one built by the first man himself,

was neglected and it one day simply collapsed. It was then swiftly reclaimed by the soil from which it was formed. Without a clear delimitation between good and evil; without an altar in the midst of the house, whose fire would clear the path of light and cover the path of shadows, the sons of man are left without guidance, and they thus forget to maintain the balance between world and earth. More importantly, they also forget that they are the vessel through which the divine, the earth, and the heavens are gathered within the world.

Nine generations after the birth of Adam, the lessons of the violation of the sacred have been completely forgotten in the house harboring mankind. Wickedness pervades the earth and the world, which is now filled with the descendants of the first man. Men have no regard for their own destiny, and each one of them follows his own path, perceiving other men as stumbling blocks on their course for the building of their own *ego* and the affirmation of their power over earth and world through violence.

A few men nonetheless stood out from the mass of depravity that filled the house of being. Noah and his kin alone are still looking for the path of light, attentive to the signs of the skies that could show them the way to the divine. They paid heed to the heavens, and they received the sign they longed for: a warning of the impending doom. As Noah and his kin are holding onto each other, the rain starts to pound the earth and the house of being.

Gen
6:6–
10

The land begins to be flooded by the tears of the skies, tears of lamentation over the second downfall of mankind. Torrents of water are drowning the sons of man, engulfing their bodies and taking them away to the heart of the earth, where they are made dust again. Inside the house of being, most of the dwellers can be seen being snatched away by the raging waterfall flowing from above. As they watch their brethren and neighbors vanish into the abyss, they also see that large sections of the house are now left unsupported



Figure 2.1: *Tempest.*

by the hands of man. A considerable part of the work of the generations that were born into the world out of the first men now crumbles in front of Noah's eyes. He nonetheless knows the source of the wrath of the skies, and he knows that the house that he inhabits was built with a complete disregard for the purpose for which it began to be constructed in the first place. Such a world lacked ground, and it was therefore bound to collapse, sooner or later.

Most of the house then succumbs to the pull of the earth. Only its core, dwelt in by Noah and his family, withstands the divine assault. They alone have been deemed worthy of remaining within the house of being, and look-

ing at the landscape of destruction around them, they are perfectly conscious of their chance and of their responsibility. The thick black clouds that filled the sky and poured the waters cleansing the earth of its violence now begin to hover away, and the flood begins to recede.

Once the cataclysm is over, the members of Noah's family are the only men left on the earth and in the world. They will now carry the flame of Adam toward its destination, called to unite themselves so as to give birth to new generations that will continue the work of the father of mankind. They will have to rebuild the house of being on a surer basis, and have to search for the path of light that will allow them to appropriate their destiny and avoid the pitfalls that made the past generations of men stumble.

Contrary to the last generations of men, who paid the price of the neglect of their forefathers who did not protect the altar of Adam from the work of the skies, the sons of Noah are not left without guidance. They receive a beacon of light from the heavens, a new sacred altar that will seal the renewal of the bond between mankind and the divine, with a sign in the skies: a rainbow.

Gen
9:1–
12

Man is thus given the means to edify a world reaching for the heavens, but one nonetheless deeply rooted in the earth. The earth that begat the world-builders nonetheless soon once again finds itself neglected by its sons, as the infinite depth of the heavens is simply too enticing to the simple-minded and ungrateful creatures. The clouds' softness and malleability present a sharp contrast with the roughness and rigidity of the soil under their feet. Man is easily seduced by the countless possibilities they offer, and he promptly loses himself in them, forgetting his origin: the earth from which his world gains its purpose.

The sons of Noah thus forget the path pointed out by the altar, and they let the sacred structure honored by their forefather waste away and return to the great soil. Drunk

Gen 11:3–4 with the mystifying power of the tools in their hands, they even begin to shape the earth according to their world: they extract earthly matter to form blocks of clay and then fire them, so as to build structures that would reach the heavens and free them from the motherly supervision of the earth. They desperately attempt to sever their link to the earth, by elevating themselves away from it, but they nonetheless fail to realize that their dominion over the world does not imply a dominion over the earth and the heavens.

As they attempt to subdue the earth by towering over it, it is not only the sacred altar of their home that crumbles: the omphalos of the world, the center-point of the universe, has now also disappeared from their house as well. The divine is indeed being hidden. Covered by a heavy veil of darkness, the center of the world built by the first man is now invisible in the house of being, and the source and destin-ation of man are thus kept secret, unknown to the new generations of men that come into the world.

The crumbling of the altar quenched the beacon lighting the path of light. The covering of the omphalos, of the source of man's being, on the other hand marks the cutting of the strongest bond between world and earth. To the man standing inside the house, all that is around him now appears bright. The house is finally entirely well lit, and it would now seem that nothing is out of his reach. The concealment of his origin liberates his imagination, and puffs up his *ego*. Master of a house which as severed its link with the tangible earth in order to take refuge in the clouds, he believes that his control of the world implies that he has successfully subdued the creation as a whole: the earth, the skies, the divine and himself, as all are represented within the house of being, and their representation can be manipulated and transformed at will by his hands.

The absence of the sacred will from now on echo as a wailing within the walls of man's dwelling, but content with the sight of his creation, the creature remains deaf to

the voice of the earth, which constantly shows him signs pointing out his own origin and destination. The man is nonetheless conscious of the need for the world to have a center-point around which his kind could gather, and toward which men could turn their eyes. As the master of all creation, what would be a more fitting center-point than himself? Man thus decides that his own image will become the omphalos of the world, the sacred precinct in front of which all shall stand in awe.

Man will therefore “makes a name for himself”. He will extract a new block of earth from the soil of his house, shaping it with his bare hands before chiseling and hammering it into an image of his own self. Not one done according to what he saw through the block previously representing him within the house, but rather a fantasy showing him as he sees himself when the earth and the skies have been veiled, and all that remains is the clouds of his own imagination. According to his own delusion, he is now the source of his own being, the source of other beings, and even the source of being itself. Gen 11:4

The new block now becomes the cornerstone of the house of being, replacing the one placed by the first man, which now lays hidden, cast out in a dark chamber of the house, out of the reach of man’s eyes. The dweller’s inebriation and infatuation with himself nonetheless do not change the nature of the earth and the skies. The idol toward which he bows is powerless to affect his fate, as he will soon discover.

One of the sources of the rebellious nature of mankind, explaining the repeated straying of man from the path shown to him, is the unity of all the dwellers of the house of being. Being sheltered in a single abode, they are prisoners who are unable to see the walls of their prison, as their attention is completely focused on what can be seen through these walls: a re-presentation of the universe as a whole. Man must be taught concerning his own nature,

and concerning his relation to the dwelling that allows him to *be*. A plan is devised, and the divine guidance that will transform man's world then begins.

Man took refuge in the clouds, and by the clouds shall the lesson for their transgression come. High in the air, a dark mass soon advances toward the house of being. The fury of the skies is about to be unleashed upon its walls, with clouds in formation, like a divine army coming to reclaim something that was stolen. Believing that his mastery of the house gives him dominion over the earth and the skies, man is not only unprepared but also completely oblivious to the fate that awaits him. Contemplating what he perceives to be his own greatness, the man in the house does not pay any attention to the signs of the skies that are proclaiming his doom.

As a vanguard of the army of the heavens, the winds begin to pierce the walls, leading man to witness the power of this previously invisible force, which is now manifested right in front of his eyes. Once again, the work of generations of men is reduced to dust, as their sons idly stand, beholding the overwhelming nature of the force that they held in contempt during most of their lives. The onslaught leads groups of men to retreat, away from the rubbles of the house, large parts of which are now mere piles of blocks laying on the bare earth, blocks that are swiftly reclaimed by it. Dozens of such groups are formed under the command of the mighty winds. They are left stranded under the skies, chased out of their dwelling, which has been shattered like a sandcastle. The house nonetheless has not been completely obliterated. The core of the heritage of mankind still stands, surrounded by the ruins of its former glory.

Within what is left of the house, a small group remains sheltered by the heritage of the first men, unaware of the lot that will befall them. Huddled together in the eye of the storm, they behold the destructive power of the heavens, but they largely remain unaffected by the wrath of the

skies, protected by the house which is more than ever what allows them to *be*. The men who are still present within the walls of the house will be allowed to remain there, enjoying the security that it provides. The man standing among the ruins can nonetheless see that it is not because of his own virtue that he has been spared and has been allowed to continue to dwell in his home. He and his companions have been spared in order to serve a precise purpose. The charge entrusted to them will be to preserve the heritage of the first man and his descendants, which is the legacy of the forefathers of all the men populating the earth. They will be the **custodians** of the house of Adam, whose duty will be to relentlessly support what remains of the house, so that the glory of what has been built from the origin of man can be witnessed by their descendants, and perhaps also by the descendants of the men who have been chased away from it by the divine winds.

Outside of the house, the storm is still raging, and the winds have yet to be tamed. Dozens of separate groups of men, women, and children are left at the mercy of the wrath of the skies. These men are forced to stand close to each other, hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder, as if forming a single body, cast away to a hostile and unfamiliar land. Outside of their shelter, they are unable to see what surrounds them, and they are guided by the winds, away from the ruins of their home. The groups are scattered all across the surface of the earth, guided there rather than simply chased away in a random manner. They are seeds that are taken away by the birds filling the air, away from the tree that gave birth to them so that this tree may reach remote lands; so that it will fill the earth with its roots and fill the skies with its branches. They are **pioneers** who are sent away, but they are not banished from their homeland as a punishment for their misconduct, otherwise none would have been allowed to remain there. No, they are rather being sent to the remote parts of the earth in order to appropriate the land, to toil and to build upon it,



Figure 2.2: *The wrath of the skies.*

forming colonies that will not forget the land of their birth.

Once the groups have filled every corner of the earth, the tumult of the skies is slowly brought to an end. The dark clouds of the storm are blown away to the horizon, and the veil covering the clear sky disappears, bathing the earth in light, thereby revealing the newfound lands to the eyes of the pioneers. The virgin land before their eyes is purely the fruit of the flow of nature. It has never felt the touch of man's hands, or been tilled by his tools, but the pioneers have been given the mission of appropriating this

land, of making it theirs. They will need to rebuild what they have lost: a house of being that will give them a sight of the universe around them, and allow them to once again become dwellers, distinct from the other creatures roaming the earth.

Frightened by the overwhelming power of the skies that destroyed their home and led them to this strange land, they are eager to find protection from the harshness of the elements. The storm caught them by surprise, and left them with nothing, and with no “things.” They cannot build the foundation of a new house with their bare hands, without the chisel and the hammer needed in order to fashion blocks and without the knowledge of a master-builder, a knowledge that requires a house where it can be expressed and transmitted. The men would nonetheless not be given a mission if they had not the means to fulfill it.

As swiftly as their former home was destroyed by the wind, the fire from heaven strikes the earth. Across all the land, in front of each group of pioneers standing on the naked earth, a lightning bolt perforates the soil, breaking its unity, forming pieces that are parched by the divine brilliance. In an instant, the men find themselves standing upon a foundation, an assembly of blocks that lets the light bathing the creation come through them, beginning to restore the sight of the universe that they previously enjoyed within the house of being. Upon the foundation stones offered to them by Providence, another gift can be found, one that they will need in order to rebuild their world. The fire from heaven melted the iron ore concealed within the soil, and it shaped it to form the tools that will allow the men to create new blocks and to assemble them. When the molten metal has cooled down, the chisels and the hammers are picked up from the ground, and soon, construction begins.

As it was done by their common ancestor, the first man, the pioneers undertake to build themselves a house of being. Here, however, animals are not paraded in front of

them. Standing upon the foundation, they can observe the earth that surrounds them and the skies above their head. From these observations of the creation, they once again start to break away its unity, representing it as an assembly of "things," blocks that become part of their dwelling. The part of the earth where they are now located nonetheless differs from the one upon which the house of Adam was built. Each group of pioneers has been led to a different part of the earth, and their world will reflect the particularities of their location. Each house will have a unique architecture, inspired by its piece of the earth, and each house will reflect the landscape where it is found. A myriad of dwellings then sprout from the earth, guided by the hands of the men who fashion them according to their inspiration.

Some of the new houses are vast and sophisticated, while others are modest and crude. Some have intricately crafted blocks, but a poorly designed architecture, while others have a sumptuous appearance but rest on shaky foundations, lacking ground. The ones that are designed to tower over the clouds, without a proper anchorage in the earth, may collapse if the heavens were to once again manifest their rage. Those that are sturdy, with roots deeply penetrating the soil given to them as a gift, will withstand the tempests and continue to grow through the ages.

The building of the new houses is a collective endeavor, in which all the pioneers are participating. Soon completed, the houses now once again sever men from the raw experience of the earth. They can no longer feast their eyes on the simple beauty of the sky, without seeing them through the windows that they built. They are no longer engulfed in the oneness of the creation: they only see the stars, the moon, the sun above; the grass, the mud, and the animals below. These "things," are nonetheless different than those that they saw before the coming of the great storm that chased them away from their homeland. The things now standing

in front of their eyes bear both the mark of the newfound land that will now be their home, and the mark of the will of the builders of the house, the group of men with whom they now share a unique land and a unique world.

Confined to their new house and seeing the universe through their new world-view, the inhabitants of each house now stand apart from the other groups. The members of each group of men are now bound together: for the years and the generations to come, they will share the same earthly land, the same blood, and the same house of being. They will begin to be more than a crowd brought together at random during the great storm: they will form one body, one **people** that will live and grow, passing through the ages building their world and walking the earth.

The house of being built by the first man remains, as a testimony to the origin of mankind, but it is no longer the only construction standing upon the face of the earth: the unique house has been superseded by a whole **village** of being, composed of disparate houses scattered across a parcel of earth, united by their nature, as the shelters of man's being. As the universe is broken down into a myriad of "things" by man's world, he and his world are now themselves broken down into a collection of worlds and peoples. Unity gives place to diversity, bringing on contrast and hiding the blazing light of uniformity that blinds the man prisoner of the house that he himself built.

For now, each house nonetheless stands isolated from the others. The men inside them are oblivious to the existence of other dwelling places besides their own. The custodians have only seen a large part of their fellow sons of man be cast away from the first house by the divine storm and seen them being led by the winds before they disappeared in the wilderness. They have not seen any of those men once the rage of the skies ceased, and they now have no way to know that the cast-away not only survived but already begin to thrive and prosper in a new part of the

earth, in a new house that they built by their own hands from a rudimentary foundation.

The pioneers are nonetheless just as oblivious as the custodians concerning the fate of other peoples. Cloistered within their own walls, they do not know what befell their homeland, or of their former neighbors. They cannot behold the house that sheltered them during the first years of their life and that was given to them as an inheritance from their parents. One thing can nonetheless be remembered by them: the fact that mankind as a whole did not originate from this part of the earth, and that this house of being was not the one built by their forefathers, up to the first man. They know that they are colons, sent to a foreign land so as to appropriate it; to make it their own, part of themselves, as the house of Adam was theirs before the great storm. They had to forget their home in order to gain the freedom necessary to build a world in a remote land, one that would not only reproduce the homeland, but also explore and extract the new earth to transform it into a building that would be true to the nature of the foreign. Only then can man let himself be transformed by the foreign, drawing out the treasures buried in the deepest parts of its soil and revealing them to others in the light of his world.

When the village of being emerges, it therefore is mostly invisible to its population. Each people remains in its own house, and each one of the dwellers is surrounded by men with whom he shares a land and a house. From their point of view, the great storm, the exile, and the new house do not fundamentally change their life. The land is exotic, and the house possesses a strange architecture, but they are moved by the same desires, the same ambitions as when they were in the house of Adam. For now, the men also have yet to experience the consequences of the splintering of the population of the primordial abode and of their scattering across the village, as all the men around them are

dwelling the same abode as they are. They are all men with whom they can speak and share their vision of the creation, without any impediment whatsoever. This, however, is only a time of preparation. It is only the first step on the path teaching man the nature of his house of being and teaching him what he is destined to be.

Through the union of men and women, children are born into the new houses, and the task of building these new dwellings further and supporting their walls is then entrusted to them. Generation after generation, as the plants that penetrate the soil in order to draw its essence out from the darkness and elevate it toward the sun, the builders are transforming the earth into new worlds, which bear the marks of the land upon which they are built. After a few generations, the dwellers of each house now share more than a common house and a common land: they also share their blood, a kinship that now differentiates them from the other peoples living upon the earth.

Once the world of each house of the pioneer peoples is sufficiently constructed, and the men can finally rest and find the time to contemplate the creation through its blocks, then may they begin to realize what really happened during the great storm. Under a clear blue sky, they begin to peer through the windows of their house, witnessing the beauty of the land, standing in contrast with the work of their hands, what stands within their house. Their eyes piercing through the landscape, far away, the dwellers can see something standing out from the natural splendor of nature: something lies there, upon the earth, something that is neither fully earthly, nor heavenly. It is something that plays with the boundaries, something that they cannot fathom, and that yet draws their attention.

A particular man stands in one of the newly built houses. The mysterious sight of the distant structure unnerves his senses and attracts his look. He relentlessly moves to and fro inside his dwelling, looking through dif-



Figure 2.3: *In sight.*

ferent blocks that form its walls, confused and seeking to gain a clearer view of what lies in front of him. No part of the house seems really adequate to clearly see this strange structure, but he nonetheless stops, looking through a part of the walls that offers him a more detailed sight of the distant enigma.

The distant structure is getting closer and closer, so close that the man thinks he could touch it. He now recognizes what it is: a house of being, similar to the one sheltering him now, and yet also very different. It possesses no doors, and no matter how close he gets to its walls, the blocks composing them remain as opaque as the earth upon which the construction is built. It does not give him any sight of the creation around it. It simply stands there, under the skies, as a pile of earthly matter, without purpose, and without light.

As he closely observes the blocks, he notices the minute details that betray their origin. The marks of the chisels that fashioned them; the peculiarities of the material from which they are made. Now, it appears that these blocks are quite different from the ones he is used to seeing or personally formed before. Extracted from a different soil, they leave a unique impression on his senses.

These moments of contemplation of the nature of the foreign structure build up a tension, which soon ineluctably leads to a breaking point. The man is then struck, suddenly seeing what had been in front of his eyes for all his life. The invisible lens through which he saw the universe begins to appear: for the first time, he can see that he himself lives in such a structure, and he can realize the nature of the blocks forming his house of being. His vision of the creation is heavily mediated by the house and by its blocks, which were crafted by the hands of his forefathers, from the earth. Through the contemplation of the foreign house, from the outside, without being able to enter it and see what vision it gives of the universe, the man can finally notice that his dwelling is no different. Captivated by the radiance coming through the blocks of his house, and inebriated by the power that has been given to him in its midst, never before could he pay attention to the nature of his abode. Unable to smash the walls of his magnificent prison in order to see the creation without the mediation of the house, he let himself be led to believe that the house was all there is; that the blocks composing its walls were the “things” composing the earth and the skies. Seeing the earthly nature of the blocks of the foreign house, whose external side is perfectly opaque, denying its power to the foreigner, the essence of his own dwelling now appears. The house is only a means, a mere re-presentation and a caricature of the universe, given to man so that he could fathom what is without limits, and see what is without contrast.

At this moment, man may see the error of his ways, and the abominable nature of the idols in the midst of his house. Seeing that he himself is a prisoner of a house of being, like the men that he hears bustling within the foreign house, the true nature of the “name” that the sons of Noah made for themselves is finally unveiled: it is found to be completely groundless, and he now sees that the image of themselves that it gives is a pure fantasy. Men are masters of the world, but the world is only a fleeting image built by

their forefathers. The world is nonetheless contained within the house of being, and the house of being rests upon the earth, under the skies, which originate from the divine.

His mind pierced by the arrow of truth, the man rushes to the center of the house, the place of worship of the idol, which is a mirror where man can see and adore his own image. With his chisel in one hand, his hammer in the other, he boldly advances toward the idol, determined to restore the truth and the former beauty of the cornerstone. His hands raised toward the skies, ready to strike, the throng seizes him, still blind to the monstrous nature of the stone toward which their attention is directed. The people chase the man away, eager to protect what they consider to be a sacred ground and continue their worship of the idol.

The man who was chased away nevertheless turns his back from the despicable creation, which remains inside the house. He now stands near another block: one representing the divine, which was created by the first man himself, and that partially restores the grounding of the house. Other men came to the same realization as him, having learned the lesson given by the creation of the village and the encounter with the mysterious house. Together, they renew their bond with the source of their own being.

The man also contemplates his house, which appears under a new light. He now sees the house itself, as an assembly of man-made blocks arrayed according to the will of his ancestors, a large structure towering over the earth, elevated toward the heavens. His eyes alternating between the starry roof and the granite floor, he is puzzled by the magnificence of his abode...

...But will he look beyond?

Chapter 3

Sinai

A great number of seasons have passed since the emergence of the village of being. The men and women within the house continued to unite their earthly bodies in order to produce the offspring that will pass on the heritage that they contributed to build. Fathers and mothers ineluctably die, but their children take over their burden, supporting the house of being that shelters their people, preventing it from crumbling and being reclaimed by the earth.

Each generation has toiled inside its shelter, creating new blocks, building new walls and maintaining others that were constructed by men who already returned to the ground. The skies nonetheless also have exercised their power upon the walls, patiently eroding them with the passing of time and the works of the rain, the frost, the sun, and the snow. This work of the skies affects the blocks of the house, unless the inhabitants took special measures to protect them. The wind scratches their surface, and the rain polishes them. Sooner or later, the vision given by the blocks to the one who looks at the universe through them begins to blur. When nothing is done, the blocks one day become completely opaque, and therefore become useless from the point of view of the dwellers, for whom the blocks are merely a



Figure 3.1: *Erosion.*

means to see and act upon the universe. Most of these blocks are then discarded from the house, considered to be mere obsolete relics of a distant era, unworthy of the effort required for them to be passed on to their children.

During the centuries that have passed since the creation of the village, the houses have experienced organic growth, but only a limited expansion. The need for each block of the house to be supported at all times induces severe limitations on the size of its walls. Each time its inhabitants fashion a great number of new blocks, others have to be abandoned so as to prevent a collapse of the house under the weight of the heritage of mankind, unless more men are brought into the house to serve as its supporting pillars. A large population would be able to support a greater structure, but it would require a will to edify, and the presence of a master-builder who could distribute the burden upon the dwellers.

With men as their supporting columns, the houses are thus fleeting and ever-changing. They are like huts whose roof must be changed with the coming of springtime. They are well-fitted to shelter a people, sufficiently protecting its

members from the elements and opening up a space where they can share and talk around a hearth, but they are nevertheless short-lived. They indeed require a regular replacement, something that severely limits the transmission of the blocks and the structures constructed by their forefathers, and also restricts their field of vision. The houses form a series of well-arrayed piles of blocks, but they remain mere piles, nonetheless. Their frailty demands both the support of man's hands and favorable weather, as the onslaught of the skies can at any moment exhaust man's forces and threaten the entire structure. This predicament would nonetheless not last forever... and a man whose house was built upon a propitious soil will soon begin to notice a peculiarity of the earth that had yet to be disclosed to his kind and that will radically transform its nature...

One day, as a man tries to build new types of structures in his house of being, attempting to break new ground by extending his house higher than anyone before him and by shaping increasingly complex blocks that will reveal the most minute details of the creation, he grows frustrated by his inability to sustain and support such massive works. His strength is soon exhausted and his masterpieces crumble in front of his eyes, which are filled with the waters of desperation.

The man nevertheless perseveres in his endeavor, looking for new ways to shape and assemble new building-blocks of the shelter of his being. As he manipulates lumps of earth, the source of his creations, his eyes are suddenly attracted to a different part of the soil on which he lives. He approaches this unknown ground, stoops down and plunges his hands in the wet mud in which his feet are now already securely anchored. Examining more closely this new-found part of the earth, he discovers that it possesses an unusual appearance, one that contrasts with the material from which his house is built. Intrigued by the mysterious substance, the man then begins to work it, shaping it into a

block that could become part of his abode. When working it, he is immediately struck by the peculiar behavior of this material: just like the ones he previously saw and used inside his house, the resulting block can be smoothly shaped according to his own inspiration, but contrary to the others, it is also sufficiently hardened to be able to stand on its own, without requiring the support of man's hands in order to prevent it from being reclaimed by the earth from which it came. Furthermore, the man soon also finds out that this substance can also be applied as a coating over preexisting parts of the house, hardening them and rendering them immune to the work of the skies. It forms a **cement** that will profoundly transform the house's architecture and the way man dwells in it.

The wondrous dis-covery captivates the man's imagination, as he sees the countless possibilities it offers. A whole new space now opens up, where his house can grow and into which his will can be poured out in order to explore and appropriate this new realm. His hands freed from the need to constantly support both his creations and the ones of his ancestors or fellow dwellers of his house, he can devote a greater part of his strength to the exploration of the world and its edification into new areas that have yet to be discovered.

The man who first unveiled the secret of the cement is an explorer of the earth and the world, and it is his nature as an explorer that allowed him to step on an untrodden path. The explorer clears the new path in order for others to follow him, and he therefore teaches the fruit of his discoveries to his friends and kinsmen. The gift of the earth to the world, the cement, is thus shared with all the dwellers willing to use it. Its use even spreads throughout the village, either independently, through the work of other explorers, or simply as the result of a mimesis, as foreigners saw the nature and purpose of the cement, even without stepping inside their house of being. This new construction

technique is then adapted by other peoples to the part of the earth that they inhabit, so that they also can create some kind of cement, perhaps made of a different material, but sharing its extraordinary nature allowing constructions to stand by themselves. Soon, this new technique that helps them transcend the limits of their world is found in almost every corner of the village.

The new technique reaches the house of Adam, in the heart of the village, but it has yet to find a man able to dexterously use this tool, a man who would be able to wield this power to its full extent. The first house of mankind is therefore not immediately transformed by the discovery of the cement. A sign from the heavens will be necessary in order for the fire of creation to be kindled in the heart of the dwellers so that they would see the need and the potential of the new invention; see how it could affect their own being by transforming their house of being. This sign from the skies comes at the appointed time, directly shown to a man living inside the first house of being...¹

Many events fill the lives of the dwellers of the house of Adam during the days of this man. Their virtue and their faith are still being tested. They are an ore in the hands of fate, taken from the depth of the earth and plunged into a furnace, molten so that the light of the creation would shine through them. Their strength and flexibility are proofed, and they are struck by the hammer of the providence, purified and fortified while the dross is removed out of the fiery mass. When the work of the smith is over, one of the dwellers of the house is instructed to himself become a craftsman, someone commissioned to employ the new construction technique in order to build a monument honoring the trial by fire that they endured. The man draws out lumps of earth and he carefully transforms them into the cement needed to build something that is meant to pass through generations. He then meticulously represents the

Exo
17:8–
14

¹ This man is named: Moses.

history of his people, as a monument of stone that will stand in the midst of its house, given to all their descendants to behold for the remembrance of the trial of their forefathers.

The craftsman having shown his abilities and his worth, he is given sight of what his people is meant to build using the new technique at its disposal: an altar, a sacred precinct that will once again guide the dwellers on the path toward their own destiny and occupy the center of their abode. Long before his days, the altar of Adam and the one of Noah stood at this very place, but lacking the diligent support of their descendants, they both crumbled to dust. Because of the failures of their forefathers, entire generations therefore had no chance to behold any sacred structure, fruit of the divine, and they therefore were unable to see the path. As autumn leaves carried by the wind, the dwellers drifted away from this path and fell into the darkness. The wondrous nature of the new material will nonetheless allow this next construction to resist the onslaught of the skies, and it will protect the divine gift from the carelessness of generations that would have little regard for the sacred.

The altar does not need the hands of the craftsman in order to appear. Its frame emerges by itself from the soil: bare stones made from the common, friable earth, without any cement. The man witnesses the miraculous rebirth of the sacred within the house of Adam, as he stands with the tools of the builder in his hands, surprised to see a work appear without seeing the artist that brought it to the world. The wise craftsman nonetheless realizes that the work has yet to be completed, as he sees the raw blocks being laid bare under the skies, without any protection from the elements. He now knows what he is meant to do, the purpose of this sudden appearance right in front of him. The man then once more concocts a new batch of the remarkable substance that can harden fragile blocks. He delicately ap-

Exo
20:1–
17

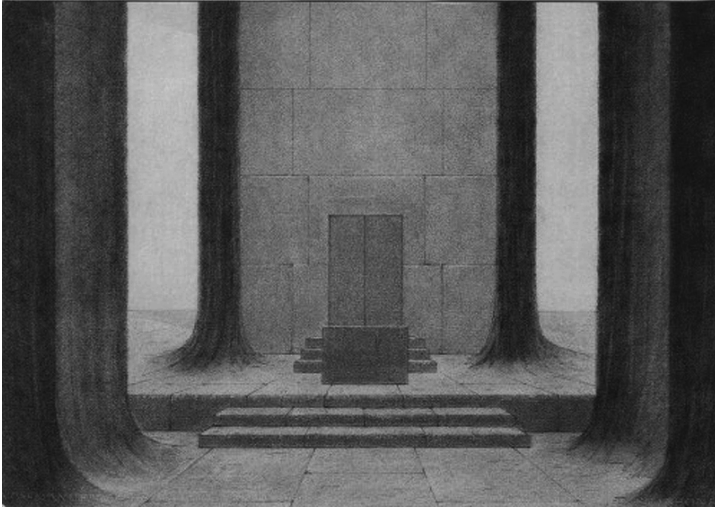


Figure 3.2: *The Altar.*

plies it as a protective coating over every parcel of the altar, covering the nakedness of the raw blocks with a rigid garment enveloping its entirety but still allowing the light of the creation to pass through it so that the men prostrated at its foot would still enjoy the vision of the path it offers to all the dwellers.

Exo
24:4

Decades go by while the man diligently completes his task, seeing a series of new parts miraculously emerge from the ground, parts that are then coated by his hands with the precious unguent. The altar slowly grows into a monumental structure, unrivaled in the first house of mankind. It is the first of its kind: a sacred space within a profane dwelling, which stands on its own, without the need of man in order to pass through the ages, thanks to the garment given to him by the hand of a single man.

Contrary to the previous ones, this altar is more than a mere pile of blocks, no matter how sacred they may be. It is a solid, enduring structure, one that is safeguarded from the work of the skies, from the wind that scratched them and from the rain that eroded them until they were noth-

ing but dust. From now on, the sacred part of the house of Adam will pass through the ages, almost unaffected by the seasons. Unless they are actively destroyed, the blocks will be transmitted from generation to generation, no matter whether they are cherished or neglected, worshiped or forgotten. As long as their earthly structure remains intact, they will remain as part of the house of being, waiting to be peered through so as to once again reveal an aspect of the universe to man.

Once more, the altar in the midst of the house will cast lights and shadows upon the walls, pointing out the way that man is destined to follow. The other houses of the village have yet to enjoy the privilege of this guidance, and to them, the appearance of the cement does not lead to a renewal of the pioneers' bond with the divine. In the abode of the custodians, the altar's centrality and permanence nevertheless do not imply that all its dwellers will prostrate themselves in awe in front of the sacred structure. What it ensures is that their descendants will not be doomed by the unfaithfulness of a single generation, by the weakest link in the long chain of tradition. Because of this, the custody of the heritage of Adam and the custody of the sacred altar will perdure, until the appointed time, when their mission will be considered fulfilled.

The effect of the dis-discovery of the cement is nonetheless not limited to the altar, or the craftsman's first monument. It represents far more than a technique increasing the durability of man's creations. Its potential for a profound transformation of the houses of being will take time to be perceived and exploited, but when the time comes, someone will see through its surface, and then man's being will enter a new stage. A new era will begin.

The most superficial consequences of the appearance of the cement are easily seen: in the village as a whole, the cement now allows man to pass on his creations, the blocks he fashioned with his own hands, without any me-

diation, and without deperdition. The blocks will not need to be reproduced in order to resist the assault of the skies, a process that always left the imprint of the men who took charge of their transmission. As if made of granite or steel, they will reach the descendants of the artist who fashioned them, who will be able to see them exactly as they were created. This, however, is only the rind of the fruit discovered in the house's soil.

The fruit of the discovery will take many years to mature. Entire generations of men will come to the world and return to the earth before mankind can see its value. These generations will continue to edify their house of being, extensively using the new technique to conceive works that will remain intact without demanding any effort from the future dwellers of their house. After decades or centuries of relentless labor, the modest abode of Adam finds itself considerably extended, as its size is no longer limited by the number and the strength of its population. Only once the cemented structures can be seen in every corner of the house of being can the deeper significance of the emergence of the new technique finally be seen by the men sufficiently attentive to what lies in front of the eyes, the things that are so close to men that they are often overlooked and never truly seen.

One of the dwellers now stands inside his house and he contemplates the work of those who preceded him on the earth and in this world. His mind is focused on the contrast between the cemented structures that are now occupying a significant part of the house and the ones that are made of friable earthly matter and require constant support. From this very moment, the man begins to see the deeper effect exerted by the cement on his world: he now sees that up until its discovery, all that remained of the past worlds was what was supported by the men currently living in the houses that opened up these worlds. Man's horizon was focused on the present, on the world built by the dwellers

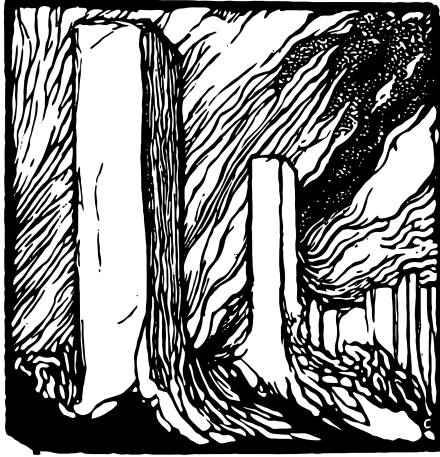


Figure 3.3: *Relics.*

around him. All that he could learn from it would have to be taught to him directly, by someone who would have to be present right in front of him. Without some sort of cement, man can only discover the new parts of the house that are inhabited by men whose earthly body is close to him, as blocks have to be passed on while their weight is constantly supported. Remnants from the past can be shown to him, but this is always done through a continuous chain of block-bearers, who carry them across time, and across the space opened within the house. Man is thus seldom naturally inclined to peer beyond the horizon of his own presence: his dwelling and his world only “exist” as he experiences them in the present moment. The past *was*, and the future *will be*, but only the present *is*.

The man now begins to get a glimpse of the way the new technique already started to change his house, and thereby also his own being. He can now perceive that there is something beyond the realm of his present experience, something that *is*, permanently, and not only *was* or *will be*. The work of the hands of his ancestors now appears as more than sterile monuments. They slowly become win-

dows giving him a sight of what lies beyond the boundaries of his own **presence**.

Through this sight, which comes as a consequence of his attention to what is present right in front of his eyes, the man clears a new path for mankind, as he begins to peer beyond the horizon of man's own presence, seeing that what *is* is not restricted to his present experience of the earth and the world. A whole new dimension of his house and of his world is opened up by this vision, as if he previously saw the creation through a pinhole and now could enjoy a sight of the universe with his eyes wide open. He first sees the house opening itself up toward the past, through the remnants of the work and the lives of the men who have already exhausted their forces and now sleep in the womb of the earth. The altar opens up the world toward another direction: the future of the creation can be seen through some of its parts, visions that are mere glances, but nonetheless allow him to realize the true extent of man and of his dwelling, and also his place in the creation.

Rev
1-22

The ecstasy that he feels while contemplating the new dimension of his world, which had always been there but only now is revealed to him, invites him to lose himself in the vision of the gigantic nature of the creation. Through his sight of the true extent of his house of being and of his world, which reaches the limits of the skies, he now also gains a truer vision of the earth upon which he is thrown. The ruins of the lives of his ancestors, which are scattered across the earth, now appear as the products of a world, rather than mere "things." He looks at the cemented blocks that have been preserved from remote times and he sees that they may offer him a chance, a key unlocking the nature of his own being, and his own destiny.

The new dimension of the earth and the world brings a magnificent gift to man, but it also comes as a terribly beautiful temptress to him. Lured by the beauty and the seemingly boundless nature of the creation, the man begins

not only to lose *himself*, but also to lose his *self*. The man fails to realize that no matter what, he will only experience the earth and the world as a present phenomenon. What the cement coating the block of his house of being brings is not the breaking of the shackles of his own presence, but rather only a vision of a place where he cannot himself go. So enthusiastic about these newfound parts of his world, he begins to forget that he is still bound to the present, and that the “things” that he sees, the visions of the past and the distant future, will forever be out of the reach of his hands. Only his eyes and his soul will transcend the barrier of his presence, while his hands and feet are condemned to remain where they are.

The man is tempted to attempt to leap out of his own presence so as to plunge himself into the fullness of the heavens. In order to do so, he would have to renounce his *self*, which is chained to presence. He would thereby cease to be who he is; cease to be a son of Adam, and he would merely become a “thing” only visible to others, part of the oneness of the creation.

Drawing the strength to resist this temptation out from the well of the past wisdom carved inside his world, the man nonetheless escapes the threat of the disappearance of his *self*. The sight of the fullness of the heavens that has been given to him; the ecstasy of the vision of what lays beyond the horizon of his presence, does not prevent him from experiencing the earth and the world as he did before he was bestowed this vision. Unwilling to renounce his *self* and his being, his eyes return to the present, seeing it under a new light, seeing that what *is* extends beyond what *is present*, even though he realizes that he cannot contemplate the entirety of the skies directly, but can only know its extent.

The man experiences the present. He sees the past through the remnants left by his forefathers, but he can now also see the future of the earth and the world through

the altar. Caught between the call of the heavens that invites him to leap beyond the horizon of his experiences and transcend his willingness to *be*, to *be himself*, and to *be present*, the man strives to balance himself. On the one hand, he is letting the experience of the present permeate every part of his body and his senses, and on the other, he peers through the blocks of his house in order to contemplate what *is* but cannot be touched.

By countering the work of the skies that erodes the work of man's hands so as to bring it back to the earth, the cement of the house allows man to peer deeper into the nature of the heavens. He can now see that the skies are more than the blue dome that towers over his kind and over his dwelling: it is the place where every thing can *be*, what allows movement and change. The cement helps man unveil the permanent, eternal nature of the skies, not as an infinite series of present moments, but as an entirety, which cannot be directly experienced by man but can nonetheless be contemplated and reflected upon.

The man standing in the house is aware of what is at stake, and he endeavors to unveil the secret of the skies. He is led to realize that the appropriation of their nature cannot occur while he remains stuck in pure presence. He nonetheless also faces the fact that he cannot sever himself from his own presence and that the key to the skies' appropriation lies in the space between the two, in the tension between the present and what lays beyond it, the past and the future. Unceasingly looking at the contrast between presence and non-presence, his own experiences and the traces of the experiences of his forefathers and descendants, his willpower and resoluteness allow him to tense the string uniting the two viewpoints. Through this, the man finally begins to see what brings him together with his fellow men and the role that he is meant to play within the creation.

Stepping out of the presence of his life within his house

of being, but also recognizing the necessity of this presence and the need for him to embrace it, the man is shown that he was blind to the major part of his dwelling, and that the larger horizon that he is now allowed to contemplate may only form a small portion of the truth of the world.

The man needs to have his feet firmly anchored inside the earth in order to appreciate the majesty and splendor of the skies, but it is also by stepping out from the earth, elevating his body toward the heavens, that he can witness the profound nature of the earth. With his will in tension between his own presence and the eternity of his house, the man is invited by the providence to continue his exploration of his world and his being. The cement and the experience it induces are mere signs that are meant to lead him to a deeper part of the path...

...But will he look beyond?

Chapter 4

Babylon

Countless new moons and winters have passed since the timeless altar was built in the midst of the house of Adam. Thanks to the cement coat clothing it, it has passed the trial of the work of the skies, and passed through generations of men who were born, grew into adults, and perished under its gaze. Man's nature nonetheless remained the same as it was during the time of the forefathers of the builders of the altar, and thus the consecrated structure soon became neglected, cast away from the sight of the dwellers of the house. Men ceased to behold the divine brilliance that shines through the blocks of the altar and their hands began to busy themselves in other parts of the house, leaving the sacred precinct deserted. The cement nonetheless allows it to remain, standing as a monument to the divine in the midst of a profane world.

The light flowing from the altar so as to cleave the world between good and evil, brightness and shadow, has now grown dim. The dwellers have abandoned the vicinity of the altar, the sacred space, preferring to behold the product of their own hands rather than the fruit of the divine, which now appears to them as an obsolete artifact left by the dead. As the house has continued to be built, but

without keeping the sacred as its center, light therefore now fails to reach entire sections of the first home of mankind.

The men within the house are so enticed by the light coming from the earth that they have forgotten the light of the world that illuminates the path they were meant to follow. The generations that followed the one of the builder of the first cemented structure are nonetheless more fortunate than those that preceded them: contrary to the other sacred constructions that were built by Adam and Noah, which withered away as soon as they were not supported by the hands of men for a mere instant, the cemented altar remains, no matter whether it be relegated to a humble corner of the house, buried under the dust, or simply ignored for centuries. There will always be a curious soul, someone longing for the divine and seeking it in the inheritance he received from his distant relatives.

Once again, mankind will be saved from itself by an external intervention. As most of the dwellers of the house disregard the purpose of its edification, and especially the purpose of the sacred altar in its midst, they will be drawn away from their home, from what is familiar to them, so that they may perhaps once again begin to tread the path leading to their destination. This guidance begins when the providence sends envoys to visit the house of Adam, strangers who will announce what will befall the unrepentant dwellers of the first house. This announcement nonetheless would have been superfluous to a people that would have known and honored the cemented altar, as one of its blocks offered them a prophetic vision of the consequences of their neglect of the sacred: they will one day be driven away from their home, and they will encounter a foreign house, a house that will not be familiar to them.

2Ki

18:18

Deu

28:47–

49

One of the messengers suddenly passes the threshold of the house of Adam and confronts the elders of the house, delivering his message from the king of his own house, the one of Aram, by fashioning new blocks that will give them



Figure 4.1: *Proclamation.*

2Ki 18:25 a vision of what will come to pass: the utter destruction of their land, of the foundation upon which their world is built. The elders of the house of Adam, concerned by the reaction of their fellow dweller, urge the messenger to deliver the rest of his message within his own home rather than in the abode built by Adam, as the elders declare that they are familiar with it, contrary to the rest of the people. The message will nonetheless be heard within the dwelling of the first men, as intended by the foreign king, inducing a tremor inside the hearts of its inhabitants.

Ignoring the warning, the custodians of the heritage of Adam and of the cemented altar still failed to amend their ways. They persevered in their neglect of the sacred within their home, and refused to follow the path of light pointed out by the altar, a path that still remains, but unseen and untrodden. As a consequence of this, one of

the dwellers of the house is given the task of revealing once again what will befall the dwellers of this abode. Something more, something new, will nonetheless also be revealed to them. The messenger then leads his people away from their home for a brief instant in order to show them the building that will soon shelter them and become the home of their children.

Jer
10:1–
11

The structure that the people is given to behold appears both strange and familiar. The men only see its outside facade, and they cannot enter it, but they know that it is a house of being, similar to the one in which they lived all their life. What they are given to see is only a small part of this distant house, blocks that remain opaque to them, keeping the vision they offer concealed to the strangers. The sight of the foreign dwelling constitutes a last warning to the custodians: if they continue to stray away from the path of light pointed out by the cemented altar, their custody will be taken away from them. They will be led to a foreign land and be pressured to enter another abode, one that will be strange to them at first, but one that they will learn to appropriate and that will ultimately become the home of their children.

Two dozen winters pass until this prophecy begins to be fulfilled. A part of the custodians is then led by the hands of other men, instruments of the divine, who take them on a journey away from the house where they were born. The men are distressed and fearful of the strangers. They are scared of leaving the home in which they enjoyed security and stability. After crossing over a wilderness, they finally have something in sight: a house of being, the one that they had been given to behold in the days of the messenger's warning. Even though they were forced to come to this land and forced to face this new house, they will nevertheless not be coerced into making it their new home. This will have to occur by their own free will.

Among the exiled custodians, a man decides to enter

within the foreign structure, perhaps enticed by its exotic nature, or simply curious to dis-cover the world concealed by its walls. In order to set foot within the alien house, the man must nonetheless first be invited to do so, by someone who is one of its masters. The exiles' host, the king who took the custodians away from their motherland, benevolently sends one of his trusted man to invite and guide the stranger inside his home, the house of Aram.

Dan
1:4

Unable to see the light of the earth that passes through the blocks of the house, as these are for now completely opaque to him, the stranger is fully blind within the new house. Entirely dependent on the guide who takes his hand and leads him into his home, the man will first be introduced to the new world by becoming familiar with one of the building blocks of the house. It is at this very moment that the stranger realizes that the man sent by the king will from now on be more to him than a guide: he will become a teacher, a light-bearer who will help him dis-cover the new world that lies concealed in front of him. This man, a member of the elite of the custodians, that is, those who were given the task of safeguarding the inheritance of mankind for the ages to come, will therefore have to humble his heart and accept to receive the guidance of a pioneer, someone who has never been given the privilege of having the divine light shine from a sacred altar within his own home.

Finding the courage and the wisdom to follow a servant of the conqueror of his people, the man now becomes an apprentice. The good-willed teacher then begins his instruction by handing out a single block, part of the house, to the stranger who contemplates its mysterious nature. The block is indeed unlike the ones he has been used to fashion and to manipulate within his home. Blind to the light of this world, he is now forced to rely on his other senses. He touches and feels the materials from which the house is built, for the first time paying attention to the earthly nature of a house of being.

The master of the house is nonetheless more than a mere carrier of rocks. As the block is holden by the apprentice, the teacher lifts the veil that covered its light, and he orients the window that it now forms so as to point out a particular “thing” that is present upon the earth, outside of the house in which they both stand. Through this act of kindness, the tutor heals the blindness that affected his pupil. The stranger now slowly begins to see the light of the earth shining within the walls of the house in which he has been invited. This light comes from a single source of light, a single window now opened toward the earth and the skies that once again allows him to see the creation, but one that nonetheless differs from the one he enjoyed within his home.

The act of kindness of the teacher must then be repaid by another: an act of trust of the student. Both men indeed have no way to know if what the other sees through the block is the same “thing” that he himself sees. The student must have faith in his teacher’s honesty and skills before he can receive the light of the new world, just as the teacher must believe in the student’s aptitude and goodwill to receive what he will reveal to him. By inviting a stranger within his home, the host opens up an opportunity for both men to develop a unique relationship: in the discovering of the blocks of the house, they are offered an occasion to crystallize the benevolence of the teacher and the openness of the student, uniting both in the block that seals the beginning of the student’s discovery of the host’s world and home.

From the experience of the sharing of a single sign, a single block inserted in the walls of the house, the path of discovery of the house as a whole begins to be trodden by the stranger, guided by the hand of his host. Patiently, the considerate teacher reiterates the experience, with another block, and he then continues with others, as if following a long chain, whose links one by one bring him closer to

a source of illumination. The blocks, as ancient artifacts, first appear as earthly objects, shaped from the soil upon which the house is built, but the skillful hand of the teacher then unconceals their origin and their purpose, which is to give man a vision of the creation and to empower men by allowing them to share this vision so as to make sense of the universe in which they are thrown. The blocks progressively cease to be perceived as “things” in themselves, material objects whose origin and nature are clearly visible to the naked eye, and they slowly come to be seen as tools that can be used by men to perceive the creation, so that they can build and share a common vision with the other dwellers of the house.

The dis-covery and the appropriation of each new block progressively enlarge the visitor’s vision of the new world. The amount of light that reaches his eyes grows larger and larger, slowly lifting up the veil that covered the magnificence of the walls of the teacher’s home. A house of being is nonetheless far more than a pile of blocks extracted from the earth. A house is not a random accumulation of independent blocks: it rather is a carefully planned structure, built with a precise purpose, forming a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. Each block gives man a vision of a “thing” on the earth, in the skies, or even in the world opened by the house itself, but they do not stand alone upon the bare soil: they are part of a structured whole, a building that only stands erect thanks to the harmonious placement of its components.

Once the visitor has become familiar with a few blocks, his instructor then begins to show him that every one of them is inserted in one of the supporting walls of the house. Each one of them is in constant contact with others: most are supported by other blocks that are placed under them, closer to the foundations of the structure, that is, closer to the earth upon which it is built, but most of them also support other blocks that are laid on top of them. United

as a single structure, they form walls, and the union of these walls is what forms a house of being.

From the point of view of the visitor, the dis-discovery of the house is very similar to the building of a shelter, as experienced by the builder of the first house. A major difference is that the visitor is not in control of the shaping of the blocks and of their arrangement as an orderly structure. The host himself is not in control, as he is only a mediator who sheds light on the walls of his home so as to make it visible to the stranger. The house nonetheless progressively appears. It grows larger and larger, and it begins to form a coherent whole, and as it happened for the first builders of the house, the revelation of the creation offered to man by the house of being comes with a price. As the veil covering each block is removed by the teacher, and the student begins to enjoy the vision of what lies beyond the house that it gives him, the nature of the block itself becomes concealed. His eyes replete with the light of the earth and the skies, the lens through which this light passes becomes invisible, and ultimately, the very existence of the block is forgotten.

As the man becomes oblivious to each block, he also becomes blind to the larger walls and the house as a whole. As his eyes become focused on what lies far away from the house, on the distant elements of the creation that he can see through the blocks, the light shed on the nature of the house itself grows dim. As the visitor begins to master the structure of the house, he gains new skills that allow him to cease to merely dis-discover. The seasons pass, his familiarity with the structure of the foreign abode grows, and he now slowly becomes one of its dwellers. He now not only can see the universe through the lens of the new house, but he can also begin to contribute to its edification. He becomes one of the masters of the house, someone who can shape new blocks and assemble them in order to extend the reach of the common horizon shared by all its inhabitants.

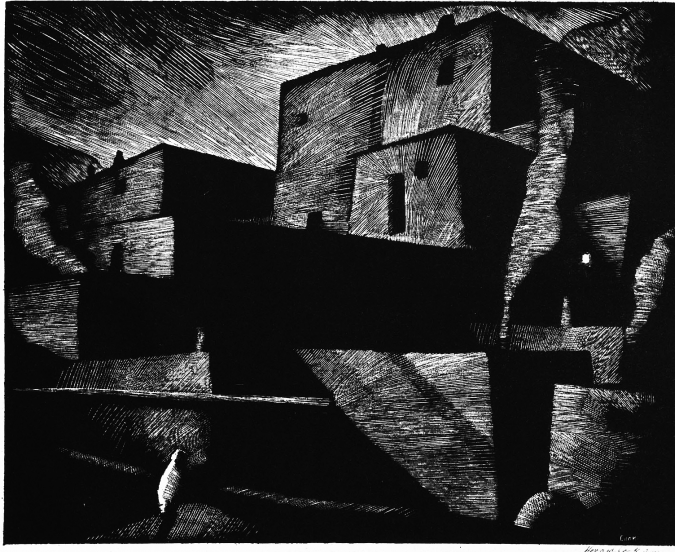


Figure 4.2: *Unveiling.*

The dis-covery of the house nonetheless does not cease when the stranger has begun to become a builder within his host's house. The relationship between the student and the master endures: it is a long dance, during which the host leads the visitor, but the host sometimes relinquish his control so that the student can learn to himself become a master of the house, and perhaps one day even invite others to dis-cover it. The dancers are nonetheless themselves led by a series of invisible hands, such as the hands of the men who built the house that they inhabit. Even though most of the dwellers are blind to the nature of the house, as they are bewitched by the light of the earth that it lets through, the structure that they inherited from the past controls them as much as they control it. The dancers move to the tune of a song that echoes through the ages and whose composers returned to the earth long ago. This song of trust and benevolence is at the source of the edification of the house, and at the source of the opening of the world in its midst, but it mostly is perceived as a mere background

noise for the dwellers of the house. The teacher sees himself as the lord of the house, who is kind enough to share his dominion with his guest, but the wall nonetheless towers over both of them and what they both see of the creation is always mediated by these walls: the house let them see only what it wants to.

After the passing of three springs, the task of the teacher commissioned by the king ends. The stranger is no longer a student, as the work of his host is ended, but this does not mean that his discovery of the house will now end. It only means that he is now part of the house and that the house has become part of him. He will continue to build and explore, but he will also be part of the throng that populates this ancient house. He is now familiar with its foundations and its core. He is at ease within it, effortlessly wandering within its walls and using its blocks as windows through which he can see the creation so as to organize it, to grasp it, and to have meaningful interactions with it. The house has become an extension of his eyes and hands, a part of himself, and a place he can finally call a **home**. Dan 1:5

The journey toward the foreign of the custodian ends with the appropriation of his host's dwelling. The other custodians who undertook the same travel will all experience such a journey of appropriation. Their children will soon all be born into their new home, while their ancestral dwelling, the house of Adam, the custody that was entrusted to them, will progressively be deserted. This nonetheless does not imply that this ancient house will crumble and fall into oblivion, on the contrary! Its magnificence will soon shine more than ever, but before this can occur, an important event must first take place within the walls of the house of Aram.

The essence of the separation between custodians and pioneers was the different nature of the mission that they were given. The pioneers were sent to explore the world and the earth, while the custodians had to keep watch and sup-

port the sacred altar with their bare hands, as the cement allowing assemblies of blocks to stand by themselves had yet to appear. Now, the pioneers have succeeded in building and maintaining a house of being in a distant land, one that is unique and that reflects the peculiarities of its dwellers and of their land. The custodians also fulfilled their mission, as even though the house of Adam begins to be depopulated, the altar in its midst nonetheless remains thanks to the support of man's new invention, the cement holding it together. In this context of relative completion of both missions, and after a part of the custodians have begun to dwell in the same house as some pioneers, something will once again perturb the distinction between the two groups.

In the heart of the house of Aram, the divine hand inspires some of the newcomers to begin the delimitation of a sacred space within their new home.¹ An altar is being built by their own hands, one that is meant to both recount the appropriation of their new home and act as an invitation to those who have only known the land of Aram, those who never had the chance to behold the cemented altar that is found in the land of their birth.

Dan 2:4 to
Dan 7:28

The altar's foundation is built by the outlanders, but as its light begins to be cast upon the walls of the house, some of the natives begin to perceive the beauty and truth of the projection, which scinds the world in two, thereby pointing out the path of light that will lead men toward their destination and the path of shadows that will end with their downfall. This new altar has similarities with the ancient ones that were built in the house of Adam, but it is not a reproduction, an imitation. It rather is the fruit of a brand-new revelation, with a uniqueness that may

¹ A large part of the book of Daniel (Dan 2:4 to Dan 7:28) is written in Aramaic. It is the first part of the Scriptures written in a language other than Hebrew, excepted for a single sentence announcing the captivity in Aramaic in Jer 10:11

in certain aspects surpass the antique creations that were entrusted to the custodians.

Having witnessed the truth of the light that shines upon their world, the lord of the house, the king who rules over the dwellers of the abode built by the sons of Aram², will himself stand in awe before the foundations of the sacred work that is now erected in his dominion. Mesmerized by the re-discovery of the ancient path that remained hidden for so long and that only now becomes visible to him and his people, the king will himself shape a series of blocks that will represent his own personal testimony, inviting all those who will step foot in this house to prostrate themselves toward the sacred structure, and inciting them to follow the path of light that it reveals.

Dan
3:28–
29

Dan 4

For the first time, a sacred space appears outside of the ancestral home of mankind. More than this, the new altar is partly built by a pioneer, someone who has never passed the threshold of the house of Adam, and never even took a glimpse of the altar that honors the most ancient and the most long-lasting manifestation of the divine. This gift marks the separation of the sacred domain within the village of being: two different houses now contain a sacred structure, fruit of the divine. The sacred spaces nonetheless remain united by the indivisible nature of their source. The two altars form the basis of a **Sanctuary**, a place where the divine light begins to shine throughout the worlds opened up by the houses of being. This light for a long time remained a privilege only enjoyed by the custodians, but now, through the second altar, it begins to illuminate a larger portion of the village.

The house of Aram indeed does not only harbor the descendants of Aram himself: as the center of a vast empire, it also shelters countless visitors, dwellers of the houses that were built in the vicinity of the earthly location from

² King Nebuchadnezzar.

which the king exercises his dominion. Members of other peoples, whose homes are located in remote lands, come as guests and are enticed by the solemn splendor of the altar. The uniqueness and invaluable nature of the sacred space touches some of them, and they then undertake a journey on the path of light. This path remains invisible to the major part of the inhabitants of the village, but the number of men treading it steadily grows.

A crucial aspect of the metamorphosis of the Sanctuary, which is now scinded across two different houses, is that all men will be required to experience a **travel** between dwellings if they want to behold and know the magnificence of the Sanctuary, in its full extent. Now, the custodians of the heritage of Adam will not only have to share the privilege of enjoying the sight of a sacred space, they will also need to cross the threshold of their home and venture outside of it, walking toward the palace of the king who ravaged their land and took their kinsmen to his court. Reciprocally, the dwellers of the house of Aram, who witnessed the truth of the vision illuminating their home, will have to undertake the journey toward the ancestral home of mankind, the house that they previously attempted to raise to its foundation. Mankind will then only progress toward its destiny when the owners of each one of the two houses have learned to be hospitable to the stranger, as they will also need to be welcomed in the foreigners' home if they are to make the pilgrimage to the remote parts of the Sanctuary. Only with a two-way flow of dwellers and visitors, who each depart from their home in order to discover and appropriate another and who are dependent on the benevolence of a people to which they do not belong, can a larger part of mankind follow the path that man is called to tread.³

Psa
137:7

³ The beauty of the parting of the Sanctuary across two worlds is also manifested by its symmetry with the relation that prevails between the dwellers of the two houses on the earth. The sons of Aram conquered the land of the custodians. They ravaged their earthly

Men depart from the home that they inhabit so as to become wanderers who travel toward the unknown, the exotic, but once they have reached the foreign, and discovered its uniqueness, the foreign then soon becomes familiar, and the travelers feel at-home in their new abode. The travel then loses its purpose, as the traveler once again becomes the dweller of a home, someone who is deeply intimate with his immediate surroundings, and has nothing left to discover. It may appear to him that he never left his home. Anxiety then takes hold of him, as the purpose of his actions is blurred, and he slowly realizes that he cannot discern whether his journey toward the foreign was a success or not. Was this a futile enterprise, since it would seem that his journey ends with him dwelling in a place in which he is at home? Has he only traded one home for another, therefore only experiencing a transitory state of wandering between the home and the foreign?

A realization suddenly strikes the wanderer as a lightning bolt that goes through his eyes and soul. A nostalgia seizes him without warning, and he begins to yearn for what he has lost, what he abandoned when he undertook his journey. He thought he had found a new home after he appropriated the dwelling of his host, but he now more and more clearly sees that something is off, that something is not in its place. Even though he may himself appear indistinguishable from the other dwellers of the house, he knows that he is just a guest who is now overstaying his welcome. He is perfectly at-ease and familiar with every corner of this house, mastering its intricacy and contributing to its

possessions and put their bodies under the yoke of the empire. Both are enemies on the earth, but in their respective worlds, they are both guests and hosts of each other, friends who require the other's hospitality in order for both to receive what they long for: a vision and an access to the path of light that goes through the houses of the two peoples. The world contrasts sharply with the earth, as the relation between the peoples is like an inverted symmetry between the two realms.

edification, but he still misses something that was unique to his former home.

A foreign land, no matter how familiar, is not one's fatherland. A traveling companion and a friend encountered in a distant world is not one's kin. To be a lifelong guest in a strange house is not to be in one's home. The longing of the wanderer for his true home, the land of his birth, breaks the surface of his conscience and it now holds sway over him. His eyes are turned toward the horizon, the home that is now barely visible in his line of sight. The wilderness that separates the two houses across which his heart is split opens up a space propitious for re-flection, and standing in-between the foreign and the home, failing to discern which one is which, his re-flection gives him a true image of himself: he has long ceased to be a traveler, and he is more than a dweller of his home, he is now a colon, inhabiting a distant **colony**.

The essence of the colony is to be an extension of the homeland into the foreign. A colon can therefore only fulfill his nature when he maintains his relationship with the land of his origin. The nost-algia of the fatherland, of his homeworld, resounds in his chest, enfolding his heart and pulling it toward the source of his own being. Following the call of his heart, the man prepares himself to once again depart from his dwelling. This time, it will nonetheless not be for a journey toward the unknown, as a response to the appeal of the exotic. No, now comes the time for a whole new experience, which intricately blends the qualities of the strange and of the familiar: it is a **homecoming**, the return of the wanderer to the fatherland, from which he estranged himself, but which he never abandoned.

During the three winters that have passed since he left the world of his forefathers, the impetuosity of the adventurer was replaced by the candor of the student, and finally by the contentment of the dweller. But now, a new feeling has taken root within his heart: the resoluteness of the

Figure 4.3: *Home.*

colon, who is conscious of his duty, of the reason why he was destined to appropriate the foreign. He had to turn away from his home in order to undertake his journey, and even had to forget it to a certain extent, but now comes the time to reap the fruits of the tree that was planted three autumns ago.

The way home is unhindered, as man has already cleared the path to the foreign. He now turns away from the house in which he slowly learned to feel at-home, and he departs from his companions and his teacher whose benevolence allowed him to enter the strange world. Emboldened by his success in his travel, the man steadily walks on the path, and soon, the house of Adam is in sight. It is the first time that he sees the house of his birth from afar, beholding its walls appearing larger and larger with each step in its direction. When he departed, he indeed never looked back at his home, as his eyes were fixed toward his destination, the foreign and the exotic, whose novelty and oddity were so much more enticing than the dwelling in which he had spent all his life, and which he perfectly knew. But now, the years spent away from it have slowly eroded its familiarity, and his heart is now pounding in his chest as his longing for the native soil quickly escalates and begins to threaten his sanity.

When the house is sufficiently close in order for him to discern the details of its walls, the excitement gives way to bewilderment. He realizes that even though the home toward which he returns is in every aspect identical to the one he departed from, it nonetheless appears significantly

different to him. He then becomes conscious of the fact that it is not his home that has changed, but rather his eyes that have been transformed by his journey and his life abroad.

While he is still on the path, the facade of the house is perfectly opaque, only reflecting the light of the sun that bounces toward his eyes. This opacity unconceals a new dimension of his former dwelling: as the light of the world is prisoner inside the house, his shelter for the first time appears as an assembly of “things,” made from the earth, under the skies. The soil from which each one of its blocks was made is now recognizable in the walls, and from afar the house appears almost like an organic extension of the earth upon which it is built. He can relate this experience to his first encounter with the foreign house, which he first discovered as a pile of opaque blocks made from the earth surrounding the land of Aram.

As the man’s curiosity is aroused by the unveiling of the earthly dimension of his home, his eyes swiftly shift away from the facade in order to focus on the entryway. When he steps on the threshold, the familiar light filling his home begins to encompass him, and once his eyes have accommodated themselves to the new light, he is overjoyed by the vision given to him by his homeland. Everything is instantly familiar to him: the vision of the earth and the skies, seen through the prism of his home that gives it a particular tint, or the peculiarities of this house and of its world, such as the parts of it that he himself or his family constructed. Contrary to the moment when he entered the foreign house, here no learning is required in order for him to be at-home and “use” the house to see and act in the world and, through it, also act on the earth.

The coziness of the home nonetheless represents a trap for the returning traveler: it threatens to lead him back to the slumber of everydayness, what he experienced before he was incited to undertake his journey of discovery and

appropriation of the foreign. Conscious of this danger, the man decides to not let himself be ensnared, and he knows that he needs to devise a stratagem that would allow him to escape the grip of the homeliness of the home and the blindness that it induces.

Remembering the lesson of his travel, the man knows that he is now more than a native dweller of his home, more than a custodian of the heritage of Adam. By departing from the custody, he has known the life of the pioneers, and this way of life is now part of him. Neither a custodian nor really a pioneer, who is someone who leaves his homeland behind without looking back or returning to it, he is now a colon, whose nature is to gather the homeland with the foreign, creating an irrevocable bond between the two and blurring the distinction between indigenous and alien, familiar and exotic, dwelling and traveling.

So enthralled by the return of the estranged traveler, his family and friends embrace him, but soon, their arms become shackles that are pulling him inside the pit of the obliviousness to what lies beyond the threshold of the house. Resisting with all his will and all his might, his hands are clutched onto something that he brought back from his journey: a line, a rope that is secured all the way up to the house that became his second home. He tightly holds on to this bond with the other house so as to escape the pull of his home and of its dwellers. Hauling himself to the threshold of the house, whose floor now begins to appear as a patch of quicksand, the man finally stands still by the door, steadfast but still in the middle of a tug of war with his own brothers and sisters, his own parents and children.

Frightened by this encounter with his own people, the man retreats back toward the foreign, his eyes following the line that links him to the distant house. The separation nonetheless immediately reminds him of the impulse that led to his homecoming: the nost-algia, the longing for the home. The brutality of the dwellers of his home was un-

nerving, but he knows that his kinsmen only meant for him to once again be a part of them, a part of their homeworld. He also knows that his duty, as a colon who appropriated a foreign land, commands him to resist. He must secure the bond that now unites the home and the colony so that his homeland and its people would benefit from his travel and from his accomplishments. Pulling from both sides with all his strength, the line is tensed and stretched, nearing its breaking point. His mind numbed by the superhuman effort, he feels that the gap separating the two houses is being reduced. Are the two houses really drawn toward each other? Or is it his own body that is stretched so as to join the two structures, united through his own body, which itself becomes the line gathering the foreign and the homeland? He is unable to know for sure, but something definitely changes: a relationship is created between the home and the colony.

The returning colon incarnates the bond between the fatherland and the foreign. Had he not returned to his home, his travel would have been in vain, but he still needs to discover the lesson that it offers him and his people. For now, he is merely balancing himself between the two locations, alternatively escaping the everydayness of the home and the oppressive love of his own people by enjoying the liberating nature of the foreign, and longing for a homecoming, the return to what is one's own and to the people to which he is forever attached. Doing so, the difference between dwelling and traveling, the home and the foreign, then begins to be blurred. For the colon, the colony becomes part of the fatherland, and the traveler is no longer traveling to the foreign. Dwelling the fatherland, he also realizes that it is not the one he left years ago. It itself changed, but the eyes through which he sees it have been transformed as well. Having been estranged from his home, the dwelling of the ancestral house becomes an experience of something strange, something foreign to him: it itself becomes a journey.

The gathering of the houses and the blurring of the nature of their relation nonetheless does not make them indistinguishable: the colon gathers the houses through his own body, but he also keeps them separate, as a beam placed between two boats drifting one toward the other. Going to and fro between the houses, the man begins to wonder whether the true meaning of his journey was not to be found in the foreign but rather in the space between the two houses. As soon as he steps into one of the two abodes, he is enfolded by the light of the world that it shelters. It not only gives him a sight of the earth and the skies, shaped by the house itself, but it also shapes the way he acts upon the earth. It changes him. The back-and-forth movement, induced by the tug of war between the attraction toward the home and the appeal of the foreign, then finally unconceals something that intrigues the colon. The two visions, given by the two worlds, not only show him different worlds: they also present him with two significantly different earths and skies. What he considered to be the surest basis of his world is suddenly shattered, as two universes are now present right in front of his eyes.

When the man lived in the seclusion of his home, the universe appeared simple to him. Each one of the “things” that it contained was represented as one of the blocks composing the house of being that he dwelt in. The association between the blocks and the “things” was so natural to him that he often failed to keep in mind that the vision of the universe given by the house is not the universe itself, and that the universe itself isn’t composed of “things”: things only exist within man’s world, within his house of being.

When he undertook his journey to the foreign and discovered another house, and another world in its midst, a new vision of the universe presented itself to him. This vision soon became as natural to him as the one he saw inside his home, but now, as the two visions are brought closer to one another by the gathering of the houses, a

contrast begins to appear, and the two visions are offering man the sight of something new, something that is more than the conflation of its two components.

Contrasted with one another, the visions of the two worlds unconceal a new dimension of the universe to the traveler. In the same manner that the depth of his surroundings can be perceived thanks to the contrast between the visions given by each one of his eyes, the variations between the two worlds allow the unconcealment of the nature of the worlds themselves. This unconcealment is nonetheless not “natural,” but rather the result of an investigation by the inquisitive traveler.

As his body is stretched between his two dwellings, the man can swiftly take a glance at both worlds. The worlds are different, but they both give him a vision of a large part of the earth, the earth that is shared by the dwellers of both houses. When the brightness of the day has begun to fade and the moonlight sheds its soft light upon the whole surface of the earth, the man knows that there is only one moon throning in the sky and towering upon the village of being. The moon always remains the same, passing through the ages without a wrinkle on its pale surface, but as the man travels between houses, he now notices that the prism formed by the roof of each house gives him a different vision of her beauty, and that it makes him interact with it in a different way.

The gift offered to the traveler is nonetheless not to be found in the variety of the details revealed by the two visions. The reward given for his efforts is rather the revelation of what was so close to his eyes that it remained unseen until then. His eyes focused on the sober magnificence of the moon, he ignored the lens that allowed its contemplation. The unique experience of the adventurer, who now sees the queen of the night through two different lenses, breaks his concentration. His contemplation is interrupted when the two representations come face to face

through man's memory. The finger that was pointing at the moon is now pointing at the lens through which the moon is seen.

The man comes to realize that the blocks of each house of being are more than windows opened toward the earth and the skies: they are prisms that mediate a vision. They are cutting the universe like a jigsaw puzzle, with each house having different cutting lines, resulting in different sets of "things." His bewilderment at his new discovery leads him to turn his head around, glancing at various other parts of the house, various blocks that show him different "things." Disconcerted by his realization, he travels back and forth between the two houses across which his body is now spread. He is struck by what he sees. Prior to his travel, he indeed considered that the objective nature of his world was a perfectly sure and permanent reality, a pillar of his life to which he could always return and hold on tight when the uncertainties of his life would threaten his faith and his confidence. Hopping between the two constructions, he sees that it is not only the moon that appears different when seen from different worlds: the universe as a whole now appears as two competing sets of "things." The pillar of his "reality," which served as the basis of all that he thought he knew for certain, now appears to be made of dust, ready to crumble at any moment under the force of his embrace. Once this pillar has been toppled by the shockwave experienced by the traveler, his view is cleared, and something that was previously hidden can now arise from the shadows.

The tension between the two worlds forms a stepping-stone allowing the traveler to finally perceive that the world is an instrument that gives him a sight of the creation and a capacity to render it intelligible, rather than the universe itself. When he encountered the unintelligible house, as a stranger who discovered the external appearance of a foreign abode, he discovered the earthly nature of the

building blocks of all the houses of being. Now, the faculty to travel between two dwellings reveals a new aspect of the houses of being, their essence, which is to shape a re-presentation of the earth and the skies, which alone can be seen by men. This revelation nonetheless brings on another: it shows that the ground upon which all the houses are built is itself hidden by the houses, and that many parts of each one of them lack a solid anchorage in this ground. Parts of the worlds of men are built upon the earth that is equally shared by all, and parts of them rest upon nothing but the belief that men put in them.

For the attentive traveler, who now sees the blocks of the houses and not only sees the universe through them, each block becomes the object of a suspicion: does the sight it gives him reflect the reality of the creation? Or is it a mere fantasy, product of the imagination of men who have now returned to the ground from which they desperately wanted to distance themselves?

The importance of this interrogation comes from man's longing for an experience of the truth of being, which cannot be grounded in falsehood. Without this yearning, the pleasant and easy experience of the fantasy may satisfy the men blind to the majestic beauty of the divine, as the fantasy gives men what they want regardless of what they need or of what they are meant to become. For those who are fleeing ignorance, however, fantasy is their sworn enemy. It is a stumbling block on the path toward their destiny, a snare that takes hold of their flesh and their mind so as to bring them down to the abyss, away from the divine light with which they want to shower their eyes.

In order to avoid the pitfalls of the groundless and rid the worlds of men of their ungrounded parts, the traveler must devise a strategy. As he travels back and forth between his two homes, the contrast between the two worlds will grow more and more apparent. The lower parts of the houses, those that are close to the earth and are the most



Figure 4.4: *Contrast.*

clearly seen, are the ones where a lack of ground can be more easily noticed. In these lower parts, the contrast between worlds should be almost inexistent, because the earth is the ground upon which all the houses are built and because most of its nature is shared equally by all. The earth is the ground itself, and therefore, something built upon it cannot be groundless. Thus, a sure way to perceive the lack of ground of a construction will be to examine what is its relation to the earth.

Fortunately, man's relation to the earth is not entirely limited by the horizon of the house of being that he inhabits. As the house is built upon the earth, man can plunge his hands deep into the soil at his feet. He can still lay his body bare upon the earth from which he came, thereby being able to discern defects in the foundations of either one of his homes. When a block is found to be defective, giving either a poor or a false vision of an element of the creation, the man who un-covers this defect can contrast the block with its closest equivalent in the other house so as to determine which one is the most well-crafted, which one sheds the most light upon the creation, so that it can be seen by the dwellers of the house.

As a witness of the contrast between blocks and between the houses of which there are parts, the traveler is led to ponder the source of their difference, and the origin

of their truthfulness or lack thereof. Carefully placing the defective creation upon the ground, he tries to peer through them so as to discover the story of their genesis. Separating the light of the skies that it channels with his mind as with a shard of obsidian, the poetic event that brought on its birth can be reenacted, and the source of the defect can be identified.

Placing the well-crafted block on the ground, the man sees the truth that it reveals, but he also notices that no matter from how deep in the earth the raw matter forming this block was extracted, and no matter how skilled was the poet in the art of the fashioning of the earth and the world, his creation remains a crude re-presentation of the magnificence of the original. He nevertheless recognizes the purpose of this creation, which is part of the dwelling that offers him a chance to comprehend and apprehend the universe. The well-crafted block appears with its limitations, as the product of man's hands, imitating the fruit of the divine. The other one, on the other hand, appears as an inferior creation, one that not only does not allow man to comprehend the universe, but also feeds him with an illusion, a fantasy that can lead him to lose himself in the world, to forget the earth, and to fail to see the role that he is destined to play in it.

Once the traveler has begun to see the defective nature of some parts of the houses of being that he dwells, and once he has personally experienced the danger of a lack of ground that threatens to engulf the building together with its builders toward the abyss, his final work can then finally begin: the search for the ground of the houses as a whole.

The culmination of the traveler's journey toward the foreign and his homecoming comes with the exploration of the foundations of the houses of being. This inner journey, this unveiling of the worlds' deepest roots, is a work that demands considerable strength in order to identify and demolish the groundless parts of the houses without leading

to a total collapse of the dwelling in which he stands. This work also requires an extensive set of skills in order to support and create structures that will replace the ones that were demolished, but that nonetheless need to be replaced, as the gaps they left in the edifice hides parts of the earth that lie beyond the house.

The traveler experiences a metamorphosis, from being a quiet wanderer and an explorer, who mainly used his feet and his eyes, he becomes a destroyer and a builder. His hands are now tightly clutched onto the tools of the **appraiser** of worlds: a hammer in one hand, a chisel in another. Once the hammer has struck down and crushed, the poet must occupy the stage, and fashion with his chisel a new and better world. His creations will nonetheless never be definitive ones. Other travelers may also one day appraise his works, and perhaps even replace them with others, which will be more deeply anchored into the ground under the house.

Conscious of the importance of his work, the diligent appraiser smashes and forms, crushes and fashions throughout the houses, ready to strike as soon as a weakness of the foundations of the houses is uncovered. He is then joined by others, who also witnessed the frailty of their home, and the potential danger that it presents to their lives and their walk toward their destiny. The legion of appraisers relentlessly strives to rebuild their home, deepening its foundations and enlarging its basis so as to ensure the advent of a bright future for their house, through the solidity of the inheritance that they will pass on to their children.

By venturing outside of the confines of his home, the traveler began a journey that will lead him to discover the true nature of his dwelling. The homecoming marks the beginning of a new era in the history of his house, an era where its dwellers not only see the universe through the blocks of their home, but also see the blocks themselves and try them with a sledgehammer to make sure that their

abode stands on a solid ground and that the world they built will not easily crumble under its own weight.

Few men will become travelers, and even fewer will join the legion of appraisers of worlds, but as the seasons pass, the houses will slowly be transformed, and the mind of the dwellers will be impacted by these changes. The weaknesses of the worlds represent a threat to all its inhabitants, but when their foundations grow deeper and stronger, the dwellers as a whole become strengthened by the work of the few. But once man's feet rest on sure ground, comes the time for him to raise his eyes toward the heavens, and to try to see where he is headed...

...But will he look beyond?

Chapter 5

Pentecost

The men who were made to travel to the house of Aram at first only constituted the elite of the dwellers of the house of Adam. After these men made the foreign house their home, they invited more and more of their brethren to also make this journey of appropriation. Their children were born in the home of the sons of Aram and their relationship with their ancestral home slowly grew distant. The house of Adam remained in their sight, and it was often the object of brief visits, but it only became a place to retreat from the ordinary and the familiar. As the head of the people of the house of Adam was cut off and taken to the foreign, its body is soon subjugated by the exotic abode. As the population of mankind's first dwelling begins to dwindle, the custody that had been entrusted to them begins to be abandoned. Deprived of its most precious resource, its people, and left undefended, the house of Adam suddenly becomes the prey of the forces of nature. At the mercy of the skies, the winds are unleashed upon its walls, the sun begins to strike its roof, and the rain is sent to flood its core.

The strongest among the remaining dwellers form a small squadron who are ready to defend their home from



Figure 5.1: *Strife.*

the assault. They strive to discourage the deserters who are fleeing or already made the foreign their home. So few in number and too weak to resist the storm that shakes the house to its foundations, the defenders of the heritage of Adam are nonetheless doomed. Without the bulk of its population, the walls begin to crumble and to vanish into the abyss. Its roof falls down and is engulfed by the earth, which is eager to reclaim what man took from it. The hearth at its core is then slowly extinguished.

Neh
13:23–
27

The bravery of the defenders does not change the fate of the house, which is meant to be transformed so as to play a new role in man's destiny. Its external walls have been almost annihilated. Its roof has fallen, and its foundations have been shattered, but as the house is torn open, it becomes as a flower in bloom, which after weeks of maturation reveals its innermost part, what was kept hidden until the appointed time, protected from the skies until the coming of the spring: the Sanctuary.

The core of the house of Adam, the revealed structure that directly emerged from the depth of the earth, meant to serve as a beacon lighting the path that its dwellers are destined to take, alone remains standing. Its strength resides both in its revealed nature and in the material used to build it. Its protective garment, the cloak of cement, made it able to withstand both the neglect of men and the onslaught of the skies. The winds stroke it, but it firmly stood. The sun tried to pierce it, but it remained impenetrable. The rain attempted to erode it, but the cement left its core untouched.

The house of Adam disappeared in its former form, but it did not vanish from the world of men. From a living house, caught in a permanent flow of constructions and destructions, of buildings and demolitions, the centuries that followed the first travel to the foreign saw the metamorphosis of man's first dwelling into a **temple**, that is, a building that is consecrated to man's relationship with the divine.

Contrary to a home, whose primary purpose is to shelter men from the overwhelming force of the skies, a temple is an open space built to offer a secluded location where the divine can manifest itself. A temple can be visited by men wanting to be approached by the divine presence, but it does not belong to them, and they cannot make it their dwelling place without desecrating it and thereby make the divine flee from the presence of men who do not know their place.

A temple is a clearing where the divine light can be seen, and its warmth be felt. It is a bonfire that contrasts with the mere sparks of the divine that appear in man's home. The altars that are found in the houses of the village of the sons of Adam are also spaces devoted to the manifestation of the divine, but these altars are often relegated to a corner, far away from the hearth around which the dwellers congregate. By being located inside the dwellings of men, the altars are also necessarily entangled with the

profane life of their inhabitants. Men share their most intimate moments with them, performing both the noblest and the most shameful of their actions under the gaze of the divine. This proximity with the profane is naturally detrimental to the nurturing of man's relationship with the divine, which should be based on a contrast with it rather than on an attempt to assimilate it. Seen in this light, the purpose of the events that follow the appropriation of the foreign house by the custodians can begin to be revealed.

The legion of the defenders of the house of Adam bravely fought against the forces that threatened their home and imperiled the mission given to them since generations: the custody of the heritage of the first men, entrusted to them for its safeguarding and its transmission to mankind as a whole. Their bravery was only rivalled by their lack of vision of the grand scale of things. Their obstinacy led them to brandish their sword at a tide that would have inevitably engulfed them, vainly using their strength against their own fate. Their mind focused on earthly matters. They were blind to the necessary metamorphosis of the world. As if desperately protecting the shell of an egg whose inner nature was concealed to them, they strove to prevent its fracture, which was nonetheless necessary. Once what is in the shell had matured into its final state, the enclosure that protected it became a hindrance that must be shattered. The house of Adam was such a shell, whose destruction was necessary in order for what is at its core to fulfill its purpose.

Contrary to the belief of the legion of the defenders, the mission of the custodians was not to preserve intact the entirety of the house of Adam for all eternity but rather was to help this house go through the ages, and in particular, to reach the age where the discovery of the cement would allow the most important part of their heritage, the divinely revealed altar built within the house, to resist both the onslaught of the skies and the neglect of men. Per-

haps unbeknownst to them, when the custodians begin to abandon their home in order to experience the travel and the appropriation of the foreign, their mission has already been fulfilled. Stripped of its shell, the external parts of the house, the cemented altar now thrones upon the soil where the house once stood, coated with the cement that has now rendered it virtually indestructible, able to stand through the ages despite the blazing heat of the sun, the abrading strokes of the winds, the eroding caress of the rain, and despite its abandonment by the sons of Adam who have now largely deserted its vicinity.

The assured endurance of the altar, and its preservation, are nonetheless only the first steps. As it now stands alone in the open space of the village, the altar's nature is transformed. Following the destruction of the outer walls of the house in the midst of which it stood, the altar itself becomes a building, a construction that opens up a space, sheltering it from the skies. This space nonetheless differs from the house that succumbed to the force of the heavens. Its entirety is dedicated to the divine, and it is separated from the profane, as no man will be born or live his daily life in it. It will be visited, discovered, and even appropriated by numerous men who will attempt to follow the path, but this contact will always be transient, reflecting the dual nature of man, who is torn between the sacred and the profane, the heavenly and the earthly. This consecration and this blossoming of the concrete structure marks the mutation of the House of Adam into the Temple of Adam, which now forms a beacon placed at the center of the village of being.

The Sanctuary is the union of all the sacred spaces. The Temple of Adam will be its center point but the altar standing within the house of Aram will also play a central role to ensure that the beacon formed by the Sanctuary can be seen from afar, by people who never had the privilege of dwelling in the house built by the hands of the first man.

Before the exile of the elite of the dwellers of the house of Aram, mankind was separated into two groups: the pioneers who were charged with the exploration of the earth and the building of the village, and the custodians who were given the charge of the safeguarding of the inheritance left by Adam and his descendants. Now, this distinction fades away as the Temple stands on its own, without the need for the support of the custodians. The custodians are disbanded, joining the ranks of the pioneers who populate the house of Aram, but as one distinction separating the sons of Adam disappears, another emerges.

Among the dwellers of the house of Aram, few will at first be drawn to the altar showing them the path of their destiny, even though it was largely built by their own ruler, the king who let himself be approached by the divine after roaming the earth for seven years in a state of ecstasy. The key position of this house, at the center of a large empire holding sway over the earth, nonetheless also attracted many foreigners, who came to make it a second home. These men, coming from various parts of the village, will also be given a chance to witness the truth shown by the altar and to begin their journey on the path. Mankind will therefore be separated anew: not according to an arbitrary fate, like it was the case with the separation between pioneers and custodians following the building of the idol in the house of Adam, but rather according to their own virtue, according to the faith that they place in the vision offered to them by the altar and the sagacity that will lead them to undertake the journey. Dan 4:31–34

For those who have been attracted by the light of the altar and have peered through the entirety of its structure, the journey can begin. One of the first steps of the journey on the path is to follow the call for the great pilgrimage. The altar is a doorway opened toward the foreign, a doorway from which the Temple can be seen. Those whose are determined to explore the Sanctuary are destined to ven-

ture outside of their home and to come as pilgrims to behold and appropriate the heritage of their ancestors while they are shown a new part of the path.

Upon his arrival in the vicinity of the Temple, the first pilgrim discovers the strange structure. He is struck by its nature, as a sacred structure that stands on its own, solidly anchored into the soil and standing erect toward the heavens, appearing to defy the pull of the earth that brings down the creations of man's hands. Its magnificence is also greatly highlighted by its location, standing alone at the center of the village, under the naked skies and upon the bare earth. The Sanctuary forms a clearing into which the divine brilliance is poured in the midst of a dark forest of profane constructions. Its access is easy: it only requires a willingness to explore what lies beyond one's horizon, and as one wanders into the unknown, the unfamiliar, one is bound to sooner or later stumble upon the clearing. Then, one is offered the possibility to discover the Sanctuary, which opens itself up to all who are respectful of its sacred nature.

Once he has plunged himself into the divine presence and refreshed his soul to its core, the pilgrim is invited to return to his home. Indeed, the pilgrimage can only be a transient event, a dedicated time consecrated to the visit of a sacred space. The Sanctuary is not profaned by the presence of the pilgrim, but the light of its holiness would grow dim if men were to overstay their welcome and permanently dwell in the place devoted to the divine. Wanting to assimilate himself or be absorbed by the divine presence, he would only render the space unfit for it, and therefore make it flee toward the wilderness, where it can be contrasted with the world of men.

The homecoming of the pilgrim increases the distinction between the men walking on the path and those who are straying from it. With the flow of travelers, the tension between the remnant of the house of Adam and the house

of Aram is increased, but as this tension is unique inside the village, men are oblivious to its existence. With the passing of the centuries following the exile of the custodians, fewer and fewer are born inside the first house of mankind, and soon enough, only those who have made the house of Aram their home can hear the call for the pilgrimage. Members of all the peoples of the village find themselves gathered near the altar of Aram, in the midst of the imperial house, when a divine sign appears, and the shock induced by its appearance will ripple through the entirety of the village, and throughout the ages.¹

One day, a group of men is gathered near the altar of Aram, occupied with both divine and profane matters. The men have little in common besides their nature as pilgrims, who are familiar with the Temple and are walking on the path, each at a different pace and with a different level of commitment to it. This crowd has been assembled by the providence from all the corners of the village. They mostly are foreigners, mere visitors to the imperial house, which remains both familiar and foreign to them, but destiny will lead them to share an experience that will be given to them alone.

As the group stands in the abode of the emperor, the wind suddenly enters and surrounds them. It slides around the men, invading the space between them so as to take hold of their bodies. It then snatches each one of them with a strong embrace and lifts them up toward the heavens, away from their land and from their familiar dwelling. Without warning and without consent, the men now find themselves flying on the wings of the wind. They are all scattered, heading toward different corners of the earth, as the petals of a flower caught in a gust of wind, swirling away until all

Act
2:1–4

¹ Evidence concerning the fact that the Aramaic language supplanted Hebrew in the Holy Land during the Apostolic times is numerous in the Scriptures. The Aramaic quotes of Jesus in the Gospels are the most convincing; cf. Mar 5:41, for example.

that they have known has disappeared from the horizon.

The men raptured by the wind nonetheless are not taken away to be left stranded in the wilderness, or simply to be removed from the world of men. Safely carried on the wings of the wind, they are soon reaching their destination: other houses of the village of being, remote from their homeland and also remote from the imperial house, whose existence until then remained unknown to them.

As one of the men sees a strange dwelling appearing on the horizon, his anguish is finally calmed. He now begins to see that he was not taken away in response to his many disrespects toward the Sanctuary, but that he rather is meant to receive a teaching from the master of all "things." He knows that the house that now grows larger and larger in front of his eyes will not be a prison or a place of rest but rather a classroom, a place of instruction where he will be given the opportunity to receive a gift, and duties, but only if he finds the strength to open himself up to them.

Upon his arrival in the neighborhood of the strange house, the man was convinced that the wind would grow weaker and weaker, gently leading him to the threshold of the place he was destined to visit, but contrary to his expectations, the wind is still vigorous, and the man is now approaching the entrance of the house at great speed. This conviction originated in the man's previous experience: the time he traveled toward the unknown, before reaching a foreign house.

When he encountered the foreign for the first time, the house's entrance was tightly sealed, preventing any intrusion by outsiders. It is only after he was invited inside by one of the masters of the house that he could pass through its doors and begin to contemplate its inner nature. To the visitor, the house was first plunged into darkness, as if his eyes were covered by a veil, rendering him blind to his surroundings. The benevolent master slowly lifted up this



Figure 5.2: *The visit.*

veil and led him to dis-cover the house that would, after a very long process, become a second home to him.

Now, the experience is of a radically different nature. As he approaches the main entrance of the house, he instantly notices that its doors are wide open, offering an unencumbered passage to the winds, and offering itself to be invaded by the strangers who are carried to its threshold. More than this, he can already see that the house is not plunged into darkness: its splendor is already visible from afar. It is gorged with light, which carries the magnificence of the house toward the skies, up unto the eyes of the man who is wandering in the ether, his hand firmly grasping the wings that brought him to this remote land.

The mighty wind now takes the man through the hallway of the foreign house, as a strong husband carries his bride into the nuptial chamber, without hesitation, allying firmness with gentleness. The eyes of the traveler are suddenly struck with a blindness: not one induced by the darkness, as it was the case when he first entered a foreign house under the invitation of one of its masters, but rather one originating in the overflow of brightness experienced by someone who was previously plunged in the dark and then suddenly sees the face of the sun. Once his eyes are

accustomed to the light of the house, the man can at once behold all of its chambers, all the structures built by the generations of men who have dwelt this edifice. Here, he did not have to receive the invitation of a master, nor did he have to painstakingly dis-cover every block of the house under the guidance of a teacher. All was revealed to him in an instant, without effort, and without any act of will.

With a faint echo of its whirling, the wind left as swiftly as it came, leaving the visitor standing in the midst of a strange abode. Even though the house was fully illuminated, wide open toward the universe and gathering it as a set of “things,” the man could nevertheless not see any of the dwellers of this house that appeared to be teeming with life, as if he was himself a ghost that ventured inside a dwelling place of the living but nonetheless could not share their company.

The strange house is nonetheless now far from being without activity. As soon as the man’s eyes have witnessed the extent and the exotic nature of his present location, the winds soon reenter the house, not to snatch him away from his contemplation but rather to use him as the instrument of a revelation, one that will give its meaning to this extraordinary journey.

The winds seize the man’s arms, and they open up his hands in order to prepare him to receive the tools of the builders of this world. They then proceed to guide his hands so that they would be filled with the soil upon which the house stands. Unconsciously, the man begins to shape this earth and to transform it into blocks. These blocks are one by one assembled into a structure that protrudes from the house’s foundation. It stands in the middle of the house, but just like the walls of this abode, the new structure is also a window opened toward what lies beyond the house, and it offers the dwellers a vision of the outside. When the structure is almost complete, the man finally realizes what his hands have built: what stands in front

of him is an altar, somewhat similar to the one in front of which he prostrated himself within the imperial house, but also possessing a uniqueness, a flavor different than the other sacred spaces that he has seen before.

The man has been the instrument of the edification of the first altar of this house. He is humbled by this realization, but he is compelled to interrogate himself: why did he, someone who just discovered the existence and nature of this ancient house, had been given the honor of building its first sacred space? His own nature, as a mere instrument, nonetheless soon leads him to realize that he is just a cog in a very large piece of machinery, and that his own *ego* had no role to play in this revelation. The deflation of his *ego* brings man's attention to what really matters: the revelation itself, rather than the instrument through which it came to be. Carefully approaching the delicately crafted structure, the man stoops and begins to peer through its blocks, placing himself on the trajectory of the light that it shapes into a vision. What it unveils is the nature of the altar itself: the fact that it is nothing but a mirage, which is invisible to most of the dwellers of this house. This mirage is nonetheless meant to serve a purpose, which is soon identified by the man whose attention is focused on the altar: it represents the blueprint of what he will have to build in the future. It is a vision meant to inspire him so that he will find the resoluteness and develop the skills to accomplish his mission, which will be to bring the sacred to the profane, to clear a space within this precise house so that the divine can manifest itself in its midst.

The man knows that he will soon leave this strange place, but he also knows that he will be called to find his way back to it in the near future. He will have to discover this house with the help of its masters, and he will have to find companions who will assist him in the edification of the altar of this exotic dwelling. The vision of the altar given to him is nonetheless very incomplete, and he already has

sensed that the brightness will soon be hidden from him and that with this occultation his memory of the precise structure of the future altar will soon fade into oblivion. He will nevertheless remember the essential element of the revelation: that he is given the mission of the bringing of the sacred to this house. He will have to strive to find it first, making his way through the village of being, and once it is found, he will also have to strive to clear up a space worthy of the divine presence.

With the realization of the nature of his mission, the man's heart finally finds peace, as the meaning of this sudden adventure into the strange land becomes clear. His breathing grows slower, reflecting the inner state of the **missionary**, whose horizon now finds itself greatly enlarged by the range of possibilities opened by his future work. As he calmly expires, his breath is accompanied by the wind that swiftly reemerges within the house. The destination of the travel has been reached, and now comes the time of the homecoming. The winds delicately enfold back the man, who now is sufficiently trustful to let himself be seized without resisting, and without worries.

Carried back on the wings of the winds, the man sees his future mission field growing distant, smaller and smaller until it is nothing but a vague shadow on the horizon. On his way back, the man seizes the occasion to contemplate the wideness of the world and the place occupied both by his home, which he can now begin to see, and the house that he visited, hoping that he would keep the image of its location imprinted in his mind so that it may facilitate his journey back there, when the time will have come.

With the murmur of the winds in his ears, the man now approaches the imperial house, which is wide open, familiar to him and ready to welcome him without delay, without invitation. As he is about to enter back into the house, his eyes are nonetheless drawn toward the skies, where he can see something like a bevy of doves flying in his direction. As

the swarm gets closer to him, he distinguishes the shape of the creatures: they are his companions, the men who were scattered by the winds to the four corners of the village and are now brought back from whence they came. A throng is formed in the midst of the house, as the men scattered by the winds are gathered together, standing and observing the unique phenomenon that is occurring in front of their eyes, bewildered by its wondrous nature.

As the group is assembled within the house, the men begin to share their experience with their companions. They discover that they all were taken to a different house of being, one which they never entered before and that nonetheless was offered to them, miraculously familiar and well-lit upon their arrival. The more perspicacious men among them, those who accurately perceived the nature of the travel and of the vision given to them in its midst, then expose the nature of the mission to their companions and convince them to accept the task entrusted to them. Act
2:7–
12

The mission is clear: it is first to bring the sacred to the houses deprived of a proper consecrated space. Interrogations and uncertainties nonetheless remain. They are conscious of the obstacles that will stand in their way, and of the need for them to devise strategies to fulfill the mission. As they all departed from the house that they visited, their vision of the altar constructed in its midst was blurred and it finally became a mere shadow, as this altar can only be seen when one is inside the house that shelters it. But the men never appropriated the house: they were only given an instantaneous vision of it, and they therefore have to discover this house anew, with the help of its dwellers, before they can build an altar inside it.

The mission will not nonetheless end with the building of the altars in the various houses of the village. The altars will represent invitations to the population of the village so that they would come as pilgrims to the other parts of the Sanctuary, the Temple of Adam and the altar of

Aram, and perhaps also take upon them the burden of the missionaries, building sacred places and inviting others to follow the path.

For now, the men returning from their miraculous expedition must first come to an agreement concerning the nature of the mission and the destination of mankind that was given to some of them to see. The miracle brought on by the divine wind is the culmination of a process that was long in the making: the mission was already announced before, in the house of Aram, by someone who embodied the divine more than any other creature that walked the earth. This man offered his revelation directly to a small number of men, to which he entrusted what he built inside the house of Aram: an extension of the sacred space. This work is unlike the rest of the altar of Aram. It is more rustic, more plain, more primitive. It is laid bare, unprotected from the elements, left outside of the cover of the cloak of cement. Its existence entirely depends on the support of a few men within the house, who have taken upon themselves the charge of its perpetuation.

As this man, this instrument of the revelation of man's destiny did not leave any rigid structure that would be able to resist the work of the skies, and only handed over a frail, uncemented construction to a small part of the inhabitants of the house, four of the men who form the bearing pillars of the fragile building-work undertake to rebuild it from the ground up, using the *technique* that will allow it to be securely passed to their distant children. Each one of them decides to fashion his own representation of the original structure, according to their ability and their knowledge of the vision that they saw with their own eyes. They are very much aware of the necessity of the addition of a cement cloak that will clothe these extensions of the Sanctuary, as these extensions will soon become part of the consecrated structure that will form a model from which the sacred will be brought to the profane, the distant houses of the village

that had yet to enjoy a vision of the Sanctuary.²

Furthermore, they are also aware that they will have to integrate their own contribution to it, the elements that will establish the continuity between the revelation that was handed out to them in the past and the mission that will constitute the basis of their future. The miracle, the travel on the wings of the spirit and its aftermath, which led them to prepare an extension of the Sanctuary, all will have to be integrated to the new creation, showing its purpose and the aim of the mission.³

Once again guided by the winds, those who among the missionaries have been entrusted with the building of the new altar are led outside of the imperial house. They are then brought to another dwelling, one which is already familiar to some of them: the house of Yawan.⁴ The construction of the new altar can then begin. With patience and care, the artists are crafting the new structure, delicately piling up and arranging the blocks that will compose it, with different men given charge of different of its parts. Some of the craftsmen are more skilled than others in their art, as some of them have been raised inside this house while others only made it a second home later in their lives. All are nonetheless determined to make their work of art a true reflection of the vision given to them, with the winds softly guiding their arms and their fingers when their willpower is weakened by the realization of the daunting nature of their task.

While some are perfecting the last part of the Sanctuary, others have already begun their journey to explore the village of being. They wander among the unexplored lands of the earth, those that have yet to be in contact with their

² These four pillars, clothed with a cloak of cement, are the four Gospels, according to S^t Matthew, S^t Mark, S^t Luke and S^t John.

³ These are the book of Acts, the Epistles, and the book of Revelation.

⁴ Also known as the Greek language.

homeworld, hoping that the winds will guide them toward the house where they were miraculously carried before.

As one of these men is peregrinating on the most remote parts of the earth, struggling to recognize something familiar among the enigmatic buildings that fill the village of being, he finally notices that one of the structures stands out from the others. Each one of the dwellings that surround him are tightly sealed shut, letting nothing escape from their core, as a prison where the light of the world is condemned to stay out of reach of the outsider, of those who have not accepted to dwell in its midst, agreeing to work for its edification and let themselves be worked by it. One of them nonetheless displays a peculiarity, an attribute that contrasts with its strangeness and with its impenetrable nature.

As impregnable as it may be, the house nonetheless lets a part of itself be discovered by all those who stumble in front of it. The sight of its flesh is reserved to those who are deemed worthy of penetrating it, but by meticulously covering itself with its mantle, that is, its walls, it nevertheless lets itself be unambiguously identified, recognized inside the village. As the man observes the outer layer that cloaks the foreign treasure, he recognizes certain of its details, knowing that even though the complete and unrestricted familiarity that he experienced inside this house, which at the time offered itself to the stranger, is now gone and forgotten, something of this experience nonetheless remains, a trace left on his mind, reminding him of the joy that he felt while standing in its core. He can now smile and rejoice. He has now reached his destination, the mission field toward which he has been called and guided.

The man then approaches toward of the door of the house and pounds on it to attract the attention of its inhabitants. One of the masters of the house soon breaks the seal of the building and agrees to let the stranger pass its doors. Contrary to his first experience between these walls,

the house now appears to him as completely plunged in the dark and he thus has to let himself be guided by the hand of the master of the place. Following this introduction, the man will once again have to rebuild the relationship he experienced with the dwelling and its dwellers so that he can once again be intimate with both: himself part of them, and themselves part of him.

The (re)appropriation of his mission field will take years but the traveler is not condemned to permanently remain inside it. He can travel back to the other houses that are already homes to him. Such travels may even be necessary for the accomplishment of his mission: he indeed needs to consult the other missionaries and assist them in the completion of the edification of the final part of the Sanctuary. The sacred space is the omphalos of the village of being, and therefore great care is put into its construction so that it would forever stand as a monument to the divine and be a beacon guiding mankind as a whole. Decades will pass before this marvel reaches its final form, forcing the missionaries to wait before they can build the altars in their mission fields. These distant altars are indeed meant to form re-presentations of the fullness of the Sanctuary, brought to the most remote parts of the village. Until the Sanctuary has been completed, the missionaries are therefore left without a blueprint of what they need to build. They may first discover and appropriate the house, but patience will be required before its inhabitants can enjoy the sight of the holy place, in their own home. The missionaries are nonetheless never forced to remain idle during this time: they may themselves decide to become the beacon that they are waiting to build, by directly inviting the dwellers to follow them and to come as pilgrims to discover the magnificence and truth of the Sanctuary, as it presently exists.

The long and complex work that takes place during the decades that follow the miraculous journey of the fu-

ture missionaries, a work that required the collaboration and a certain spiritual unity between numerous builders of the Sanctuary, also becomes the source of a deep transformation of the village itself. A dis-discovery, fortuitous or the fruit of a divine guidance, comes together with the edification of the altar of Yawan: before, interactions between the houses of the village were only mere tensions, lines that connected the houses but that did not allow transports, and ex-changes between them.⁵ The building blocks of the houses cannot be carried on a fleeting line in tension between two dwellings. For such a task, one needs something more robust, something that will allow the ex-changes to flourish within the village: **bridges**.

Bridges are building works that bring locations together while keeping them distinct and separated from one another. They allow interactions and ex-changes between their two sides, without merging them into a single entity. The dis-discovery of the bridge-building technique arises out of the necessity to re-present certain elements of the Temple of Adam and the altar of Aram on the altar of Yawan. The three components of the Sanctuary indeed need to form a coherent whole, need to form a single beacon leading men toward the same destination, even though it might be through different paths.

Mat 1:23 The first transport between houses occurs when one of the artists crafting the altar of Yawan feels the need to show a peculiar block which is part of the Temple of Adam in the other house in which he is completing his task.⁶ The artist here does not want to create a block that would offer the same vision as another, located in a different abode, but he rather wants to show the external nature of

⁵ Transports and ex-changes between houses of being are also known as *translations*

⁶ This verse (Mat 1:23) contains the first instance of a direct translation in the Scriptures, one where both original and translation are presented alongside each other.

the foreign block, to make it visible to those who would prostrate themselves in front of the last altar.⁷ In order to do so, the man simply takes the matter into his hands and carries it away, across the bridges, toward the entrance of the other house.

Once the foreign block has been introduced inside the foreign edifice, the carrier knows that he must then find a way to integrate this strange object within the walls of this house of being. He sees that he cannot simply bluntly insert it in the foreign structure: the architecture and the nature of the house require that the foreign element be adapted to its new environment. He realizes that certain aspects of the block must be polished, while for other parts chiseling is necessary. The reshaping of the block is done in accordance with the architecture of the house so that the foreign element can be put in relation with its entirety, and so that it can then readily be manipulated and peered into by all the dwellers.

Soon after the first use of the bridge, the same man proceeds to once again trans-port the same block from one house to another. This time, he does not attempt to reproduce the external appearance of the original block inside the foreign house but rather tries to create a sign that will offer the dwellers of this house a vision similar to the one offered by the original block in the original house.⁸ The artist hammers and chisels an entirely new block, made from the earth that forms the ground of the house in which he stands, imitating as faithfully as possible the vision given by the block that he carried here. Placed one alongside the other, the two blocks, originating from the same foreign location, both represent the first clear manifestation of the use of a bridge. This manifestation also occurs in two significantly different ways, illustrating the fact that bridges are tools

⁷ In technical language, this is known as a “transliteration.”

⁸ The first ex-change was a “transliteration,” while the second one is a “translation” proper.

that can be used in different manners by the builders and the artists who populate the village of being. The repercussions of the emergence of bridges will be profound and far-reaching, and the first instances of their uses are only the first ambers that will lead to the kindling of a blazing fire that will illuminate the entire village. The ignition of this fire will nonetheless take time, leaving an ample delay for men to prepare and to occupy themselves with other tasks.

After the passing of many seasons, the construction of the third and final part of the Sanctuary is ended. The structure has reached its final state. It is coated with cement within the house of Yawan, ready to pass through time, standing as a monument to the bond between man and the divine. Builders and onlookers can now behold the perfection of the sacred artwork, the holy place whose building blocks were crafted at the dawn of time and that now offers a vision of mankind, as an entirety, from its origin until its destination.

The perfection of the Sanctuary is nonetheless not to be found in its outward appearance. Each one of its three parts can indeed appear somewhat too rough in their construction to the artists who have spent their lives practicing the art of building in their vicinity. Furthermore, some will consider the triune nature of the holy place to be inharmonious, as each one of its components is built with significantly different materials, different styles of constructions, and different architectures. Behind this veil of imperfection, we may nevertheless find the splendor and the ingenuity of the Sanctuary, which is only revealed to those who are ready to peer into its core. Disappointed by the apparent disharmony of the structure, the men who only follow the superficiality of their senses quickly go out of the sacred space, preferring the obvious beauty found in the works of the many artists that can be found throughout the village. Among the throng assembled in its heart, in the neighbor-

hood of the Sanctuary, a man can nonetheless be seen to pay a close attention to the edifice which is now complete, and whose triune structure stands out from the other buildings of the village. He is perplexed by its uniqueness and its apparent lack of harmony. The man nonetheless puts his trust in the guidance of the winds, which led a great number of men to build in unison this very peculiar space. He will therefore persevere in his observation, until its beauty suddenly reveals itself to him.

For the man who yearns for the peace enjoyed near the divine presence, the Sanctuary is an outer court, a place to which he feels irresistibly attracted, and where he knows that he can wait for the divine to reveal itself. He is not meant to remain a passive beholder of this sacred space: the first step that he is meant to take is to penetrate and to appropriate the three different houses of being in which the Sanctuary is found.

The man is already well traveled, on the earth and in the world. The discovery and the appropriation of new houses, which become new homes, therefore do not present any insurmountable difficulties. The recently completed Sanctuary will nonetheless open up the possibility of an unconcealment, the revelation of something that he could never see before the emergence of the new structure.

The man already had the occasion to travel back and forth along a line joining two of the houses in which the Sanctuary is spread. The completion of the sacred space appears to only add one more stage: three places that can shelter him instead of two. Walking between the three locations, the man begins to notice that something is different. His walk is now uninterrupted, continuous, as he does not experience the need to change direction and to turn around in order to go back from whence he came. He always moves forward, caught in a loop that does not give him any opportunity to distract himself from the task that he set himself to accomplish: to pierce through the mystery of the triune

nature of the Sanctuary.

Circling around the three houses, caught in the perfection of its structure, the man enters a state of trance, in which the borders between the houses begin to be blurred and the unity of the holy place begins to be seen. The ecstatic vision leads him to raise his eyes, not only looking at the path that he treads but also beholding the majesty of the sacred structure, standing in awe, humbled by the opportunity that he is given: to stand in the midst of this parcel of land, where one can more easily let himself be approached by the divine than in any other. It is at this instant that something catches his attention, breaking the state of trance and bringing him back to the world in which he is thrown. Standing over one of the bridges connecting the three houses, the man finally takes the time to gaze at the other two bridges that are laid in front of his eyes, arched towards the skies but with their two pillars deeply anchored into the earth, bringing the two houses together while keeping them at bay.

Before this moment, never before had he any occasion to contemplate the nature of a bridge, and this for a simple reason: there was only one bridge, and this bridge always remained too close to be seen, as the man had nowhere else to stand outside of the houses and therefore no place from which he could behold the link between the two dwellings. Now, standing on the edge of one of the three bridges of the Sanctuary, he can finally gaze upon the two other overpasses and perceive the nature of the relation between the houses.

The three houses of the Sanctuary are all connected by the three bridges, but the nature of these links significantly differs. As the man looks at these links, he can see that the three bridges have a different length, and a different strength. When the first bridge was built, it created a tension between two houses, a tension that revealed the **difference** between the houses and the worlds they shelter.

Now that a multiplicity of bridges has emerged following the construction of the Sanctuary, the man can now step further on the path and put the bridges themselves in tension with one another so as to unconceal the **difference of differences** between houses and worlds.

The difference of differences is a **map** representing the nature of the relation and the distance between houses. In the present case, it is a map of the Sanctuary, showing the relations between its parts, and offering a vision of how the whole emerges from their union. As the man dwells in the three houses that shelter the sacred space, he nonetheless discovers the fact that the bridges are in perpetual motion and that the distance between the houses is therefore constantly changing. The map is not immobile, like dry ink on a piece of parchment: it rather is an organism that mimics the life of the houses.

The differences between houses are affected by different forces. The first of these arises from the inside: it comes as a consequence of the building force of those who are dwelling this house and who contribute to its edification by shaping the earth under their feet and crafting new blocks that are integrated into the structure that shelters their being. By extending or removing parts of their house, the builders and the destroyers of worlds are displacing the house on the map of the village: it can thereby get closer to other structures or grow distant from them, continuously reshaping the overall appearance of the village of being.

The second force affecting the house comes from the outside. Now that tensions and bridges have been discovered and used by the dwellers of most houses, a flow of blocks will pass through their doors, providing an uninterrupted supply of materials that can be used for the further edification of their abode. This flow can imbalance the weight of the houses in the general structure of the village, leading them to either gain or lose importance. It can also pull houses together, bringing them closer and closer until

a merger is inevitable: the bridge then loses its purpose, as it is reduced to a singularity, and the two houses that it previously connected become a single entity.

Standing on one of the bridges of the Sanctuary, looking at the other two facing him, the man becomes a witness of the **play** at work: the play of differences between houses and worlds. As the skin of the sea, which unceasingly ripples all along its surface, the map of the village is undulating, the subject of seemingly random movements that delicately reshape the landscape displayed in front of man's eyes.

As the man contemplates the play of the houses, he notices that the men who populate these dwellings are the ones responsible for the play, even though most of them have never seen what takes place outside of their home, never seen the play in which their home is a pawn among others. They are the unwilling participants of the play of worlds, and more than this: they are what allows it to take place. The balancing of the houses appears as a dance led by dancers unskilled in their art, without will nor desire. This display quickly strikes the man by its absurdity, but he cannot look away, fascinated by the contrast between the gigantic forces wielded by the populace and its ignorance of its own power.

Soon after this moment of lucidity, the man is forced to witness the extent of his own ignorance, as he, exhausted by the vision of the piece of the village in front of him and dizzy from the sight of its relentless wobble, rests his arms on the edge of the bridge on which he stands and leans toward the waters that flow under it. The image that can be seen on the surface of the waters is fleeting but unmistakable: what it shows is his own body, stretched out between the two banks, and between the two houses. The man finally realizes that he *himself* is the bridge through which the flow of blocks can be carried from one dwelling to another. He is a vector of the transformations of the

houses, a source of the wobbling of the map.

Man cannot be completely severed from his homes, not without abandoning his nature as a human being. When man travels between houses, he can either leap between them, leaving the old behind to appropriate the new, or he can keep one foot in each one of them, arching his body inside the free expanse of the village so as to form a bridge that will bring the two houses closer to one another, and allow these houses to begin to dance, thereby changing the map of the world of men. But this work is a collective endeavor: each inhabitant of the village can form bridges between any houses. It only requires the will to travel and to appropriate them, and the benevolence of only one of the masters of the foreign abodes.

Lifting up his eyes from the surface of the waters, and from his own reflection, the man turns himself around, forgetting for an instant the Sanctuary that led him to the realization of his own nature as a bridge between houses and worlds, and he takes a look at the scope of man's creation, the vast building work that fills this part of the earth and reaches to the horizon. He now sees that countless bridges are being built, tying together the various constructions edified by his forefathers and allowing blocks to flow between them through the mediation of men like him.

His soul refreshed by the sight of the extent of the village and the extent of the map of worlds, the man then begins to envision the future of the small town. What is laid in front of his eyes is a sea that is moved by the countless men that are sheltered in its body but whose movement is without purpose or direction, an aimless concatenation of a myriad of random efforts that are lost through the counteraction of others. What he also sees is that all the pieces are already in place in order to allow for a radical transformation of the village to take place: the village that now appears as a bud is now ready to bloom into a flower that will embellish what is around it. The bud for a long

time contains the flower inside its sepal, concealing and protecting it, awaiting the time appointed for its unfolding. The inhabitants of the village are endowed with strength and valor, but their eyes are so focused on the building of the houses that they never take the time to peer beyond the walls of their home and thus never have the occasion to see with their own eyes that *the* world is larger than *their* world. The power that they exercise within their home, for its edification, could also be employed in a grander task: the realization of a vision that transcends the boundaries of the individual houses.

The man envisions a future in which the bridges between the houses of the village will be more than passageways that allow a random flow to pass through. He clearly sees that men like him can open up the possibility for their fellow men to bear the responsibility for the edification of the structure of the village itself. Man is not condemned to simply be the builder of houses that would be randomly moving closer or farther from one another. The map laid in front of his eyes is not meant to be a mere representation of the village but is rather meant to be the first draft of a plan to shape the relation between the houses so that the disorderly village would give place to a structure that would bear the imprint of man's will and encompass entire houses as the building blocks of something new.

For now, the transformation of the village is nonetheless only in its infancy. Men begin to transport blocks from house to house, often with the intent of improving the place where they are carried, but they seldom possess a larger vision of the effect of their work. They are the vectors of interactions between houses and the world they shelter, but rarely do they willfully shape the structure of the village itself. Their efforts nonetheless constitute the first step toward a reshaping of the village. Worker ants need not have an all-encompassing vision of their colony in order to fulfill their duty and to contribute to the progress of their

community and their kind, and in the same manner, the builders of worlds and the travelers who bring foreign contributions to the various houses of the village can do their part for the fulfillment of the destiny of mankind without being aware of the extent of the repercussion of their labor.

Even on a small scale, each house is now subjected to a profound mutation, one initiated by the intrusion of the foreign blocks carried through the bridges. The inward flow of the foreign disturbs the equilibrium of the houses. It unnerves the dwellers, as the shock of the tumbling of the new blocks threatens to topple the pillars of their home. Those who carry these blocks nonetheless know that the peril represented by the strange new elements also offers the inhabitants an opportunity to considerably improve the solidity and the beauty of their abode. As the diligent servants of the house, they know that a collision between the foreign and the home is necessary if the home is to get rid of what weakens its foundations and of what hinders its growth. They are the instrument of a productive conflict, a destructive event that will pave the way for a better edification of their dwelling. The foreign invasion will be the source of a renewal of what is their own, through a **clash of worlds** during which the truth of the world will shine, while the darkness of falsehood and delusion will fall into oblivion.

As soon as men stepped out of their home to venture into the foreign and visited foreign dwellings, houses have been put in tension. These tensions, these lines joining the houses of the village offered man the opportunity to disclose the frail nature of his home, through a contrast with the foreign. As the earth is one, buildings firmly resting on the earth cannot be found to be groundless and contradictions between worlds therefore betray the presence of defects in their foundations: the house is then shown to partly rest on the thin air of clouds. The web of tensions between houses already led to an increase in the stability

and solidity of the village. Now, the free flow of the blocks between the houses allows their integration into the foreign structure and a more fundamental transformation of the world that they shelter. The dwellers of the village can not only use the other houses to dis-close and get rid of the defects of their world's foundations, but they can also let their home be reshaped by the foreign, if they are humble enough to recognize that the gift of the stranger may be superior to the heritage handed out to them by their forefathers.

When a man takes hold of the instinct that leads him to perceive what is foreign as a threat to his own identity and his own being, he may then begin to see the unknown, the unfamiliar, as an opportunity for the further edification of his world, and through this, as an occasion for him to let his relationship with being grow in height and in depth.

Once the potential of the foreign contribution is clearly seen, the man's distress is dissipated, and he can open his arms to embrace the gift entering his home. This object is then carefully examined in order to determine whether or not it will find a place in this house. The goodwill of the traveler who brings this gift is indeed of no consequence if what he offers weakens the abode in which it is placed. The gift must either bring something entirely new to this world, something grounded in the earth that reveals a new aspect of it to the dwellers of this house, or it must help man identify a lack of ground or an imperfection of a part of his home. If the gift is found to be superior to a similar element already part of the home, it may lead the dwellers to discard the defective block so as to put the foreign, more finely crafted block in its place inside the structure of their house of being. The foreign can then contribute to the edification of the man's home, and in turn, the traveler may take away some other blocks of this house, which he identifies as potentially more finely crafted than the ones of his distant home.



Figure 5.3: *Architecture.*

The blocks flow both ways through the bridges between the houses of the village, initiating exchanges between worlds. With the sustained flow between the houses, their inhabitants can soon see more than individual blocks: entire parts of foreign houses now become part of their home. This incites them to step back from the narrow view that they always had of their own home, so focused on the vision offered by individual blocks that the general structure of their shelter remained unseen. Once man can possess different homes and once these homes can be set up one against the other, confronting their inner nature and the way they organize the vision offered by their building blocks, then can he begin to gain a broader view of the place in which he spent his life. The contrast between the inward appearance of different houses finally reveals the nature of their **architecture**.

The clash of worlds leads to a further unconcealment of the nature of these worlds. The clash does not lead to a weakening or a destruction of the work of man's hands. On the contrary, the creations of men find themselves more

united and stronger than they ever have been, and the only thing that is left shattered as a result of this battle is the blindness to the inner nature of the houses of being, the blindness to their architecture.

When the man ceases to be caught in the everydayness of his home and steps back to contemplate the magnificence of the structure of his abode, he may finally begin to fully exploit the potential of the bridges. Through the appropriation and trans-port of the foreign, he may not only weed out the ungrounded blocks of his house or insert more finely crafted foreign works into the home built by his forefathers, but he may also begin to reshape the houses as a whole and to trans-form their architecture in order to make them more efficient or more beautiful. He may change his role among his fellow dwellers, stopping to work as a builder, to instead become an **architect**, someone who shapes the general structures of the dwellings of men.

The architect is someone who possesses a general view of the structure being built. He prepares and then oversees the work of the builders. The houses of the village were nonetheless built without them, organically growing from the continuous activity of the men dwelling them, without an artificial order or a common vision. Following the clash of worlds and the unconcealment of the house's larger structure, the architects are given a chance to improve their home so that it would elevate men higher towards the heavens, while keeping them securely anchored in the ground from which they came and toward which they will soon return. During their time on the earth, they must strive to extend the horizon of their world so that they may see their destination and reach it. But will they find the strength necessary to pull themselves away from the earth and toward the heavens?... Few will, but only a few architects will be needed in order for the village to operate its mutation into its final form.

Through the work of the travelers who take upon them

the burden of the transport of the blocks, the village begins its slow transformation. Standing on the top of one of the highest structures built by the hand of man, one of the architects who oversee the work of these men starts to raise his eyes and to take a glimpse of the entirety of the village, which extends towards the horizon, the confines of the world. This vision of the village and of the play of worlds at work down below inspires him to attempt to transform the worlds of men and to be more than the carriers of blocks, more than the architect of mere houses. As both an architect and a bridge between houses, he comes to realize that he also possesses the power to change the architecture of the village, the power to transform the relation between the houses themselves so as to shape the village as he shaped the houses. The play of worlds that takes place since the advent of the first travelers is a play without actors, only pawns that appear to be randomly pushed on the playing field.

Towering over the village from its highest point, the man now sees the field upon which the houses stand. He sees the pawns that are moved by the sons of men, the houses of being that are continually moved, causing the map of the village to wobble. More importantly, he also sees that the playing field is awaiting the entry of the players, who have yet to manifest themselves. The play of worlds is not meant to remain a play but rather meant to become a game of worlds, with men deciding to actively and consciously move the pawns of the game so as to reach a destination, instead of remaining passive onlookers who are being played by their environment. Determined to show himself worthy of the privilege of the vision that he received from his exalted location, the man begins to enter the game of world.

The man will now take upon himself the task of reshaping the map of the village of being that shelters his kind. He will not only carry blocks between dwellings but also

push entire houses closer or farther from one another so as to transform the disorderly array that forms the village into a structure of a higher order, a place where the dwellings of men are consciously and carefully placed in relation with each other, optimizing their interactions. Such an undertaking will require the efforts of generations of players of the game of worlds, with every one of them tirelessly applying himself to several different tasks. They will first have to be the overseers of the clash of worlds, whose purpose is to weed out the groundless elements of the houses while favoring its edification towards the heavens. They will then have to be the architects of the arrangement of the houses themselves so that one day, when the sons of Adam will have reached a new step on the path toward their destiny, the village will slowly accomplish its mutation, its transformation into the **city of being**.

A village is a chaotic array of dissimilar dwellings, accumulated with the passing of the years, following the arrival of newcomers who built their shelter close to the ones already present. A certain harmony may arise from the flow of independent constructions, but the village is without an overarching structure: it is the product of an organic growth, the work of the hands of men whose horizon seldom extended beyond the walls of their own dwelling.

At some point in man's history, some of the dwellers, those who have elevated themselves on top of the building work of their forefathers and their fellow dwellers, nonetheless begin to peer beyond the horizon of what is their own. Those who stepped back from the vision of the single blocks to look at the architecture of their home one day step back from their home and contemplate the nature of the village of being. Gazing at the anarchic nature of the village, whose charming appearance cannot conceal its inefficiency and its wastefulness, they quickly grow dissatisfied with this state of things. Once the visionaries among the people have put down their chisel and their hammer, the tools



Figure 5.4: *The planner.*

of the builders, in order to seize a stylus and a map, the tools of the architect, they may then take a spyglass and become the **planners** of a future **city**, those who see the plane surface of the earth as a canvas ready to receive the outpour of man's will, his art.

In contrast with a village, a city is a place where the hand of man can not only be seen inside the individual dwellings that it contains but also in the space between them and in the overall aspect of the community of houses. It includes wide streets that allow the unhindered and efficient trans-port of goods between locations, strong bridges that facilitate the movements of the dwellers. The city's planners, the masters of the land, are thereby able to unite the houses and therefore also able to join all the dwellers in their midst together so that they may once again form a community encompassing mankind as a whole, as it was the case before the great storm that led to the scattering of the dwellers of the house of Adam and to the creation of the village.

When one of the architects of the houses becomes a planner of the city of being, the global vision that he pos-

esses of the world of mankind offers him a chance to hear an echo coming from the distant skies, a reverberation of the storm that once shook the home of the first man to its foundation and led his forefathers to be sent as the pioneers who would explore and appropriate the surface of the earth and edify a village upon its soil. Only now that the clouds covering the village have been dissipated can the meaning of the great storm be clearly seen. This event represented more than a punishment for an unworthy generation that created an idol to itself in the midst of the first house of being: it rather marked the beginning of a long process that would end with the lifting of the veil covering man's relation to his dwelling, showing him that the boundaries of *his* world are not the limits of *the* world.

Without the great storm and without the village of being, mankind would be united within a single house and a single world, but all men would be condemned to remain the prisoners of their comfortable prison, made by their own hands. This house would have grown larger and larger, becoming a castle or a fortress that would be as impenetrable as it would be inescapable. Standing alone in a desert, the castle would be unrivaled, and therefore its captives would forever remain blind to its nature. Furthermore, without any contrast with another dwelling, another worldview, the castle's foundations would grow weaker and weaker, as its inhabitants would ineluctably succumb to the desires of their own egos, preferring the beauty of the clouds to the cold and plain truth of the earth. They would therefore not only be the hostage of their dwelling but would also be doomed to see the work of their hands crumble, sooner or later.

Fortunately for the planner and the population of the city as a whole, the echo of the storm now resonates in the ears of the man who has reached the higher dwellings of the city. He can see the vast expanse of the land upon which it is built, and he is astonished by the varied landscapes that

can be seen across the earth. The aim of the exploratory work of the pioneers then becomes limpidly clear. It is only because of the freedom that comes as a consequence of their independence that each people of the village could appropriate their parcel of the earth in a unique way so as to build a house of being whose architecture would be in harmony with its surroundings and would shed light on the richness of the creation.

Without a diversity of dwellings, man would not only be blind to the defects of his world, but he would also fail to dis-close large parts of the earth and fail to build most of the structures that embellish the city. The wonders of the world would be condemned to remain in the entrails of the earth, waiting to be revealed through the work of man's hands. As a gust of wind that scatters the seeds of a majestic and ancient tree standing in the midst of an empty grassland, thereby allowing the life of the tree to be prolonged and enlarged when these seeds would sprout and grow into other trees, the great storm scattered mankind across the earth and thereby allowed the house of Adam to become the source of the edification of the city of being. The city opens up the possibility for man to unconceal the true extent of the earth and the full potential of his building work, his building of the world.

Endowed with the realization of the precious nature of the gift given to him by the village and now the city of being, the man can now see that the field of the game of worlds is larger than what he saw before: the city as a whole is the object of the game, whose end has yet to be revealed. After the clash of worlds comes the time of peacemaking and of collaboration between the former opponents. In the ruins left after the clash, what is left standing is what has proved itself to be the most secure, the buildings that have the deepest foundations in the earth. Now that the structures lacking ground have crumbled and withered away, the dwellers of the city are called to unite their forces

to create a harmonious city, one that would tower over the land but also penetrate the core of the earth.

The edification of the city will nevertheless be an endless task, the work of many generations of men who will be born, live, and die between its walls, before they are reclaimed by the earth upon which the city stands and to which the city will itself one day return. Even with many planners simultaneously taking charge of the orientation of the building work of the dwellers of the city, the success of this enterprise is far from assured. Indeed, the planners would have to direct the construction of the city toward a single direction in order for their work to be fruitful. As the players of the city-wide game of worlds, they can hinder or even oppose the work of their fellow players. They can destroy the product of the workforce of other planners and can even kill them when their vision is deemed too noxious to remain on the earth.

The search and the dis-covery of the direction that the city is supposed to take is a crucial step in the life of the planners, but the sight of this direction is not the privilege of those who dwell in the higher parts of the city and can see the horizon of the world. All are offered a chance to see their own destin-ation, and the destiny of their kind as a whole. In order to un-veil this direction, man only has to venture in the neighborhood of the divine presence, in the space where the path that he must tread has already been illuminated from the dawn of time: the Sanctuary.

As he observed the triune nature of the Sanctuary, composed of the Temple of Adam, the altar of Aram and the altar of Yawan, and walked continuously between them, the man was given the opportunity to initiate the clash of worlds, building three bridges between them and putting these bridges in tension with one another so as to unveil man's capacity to trans-form the village of being into a city. The Sanctuary is nonetheless more than a concatenation of structures built by the hands of men: it foremost is a sacred

space that is meant to serve as a beacon to all mankind, lighting the path that men are destined to follow for the appropriation of their essential being. The light of the sacred structures shines throughout the houses of which they are parts, cleaving the worlds they shelter in two, pointing out the path of light and contrasting it with the shadows that lie beside it.

The path of light can thus be seen in the three different houses, but it appears different in each one of them, being interlaced with the architecture of the place in which it is located. Walking between the three houses of the Sanctuary to contemplate its triune nature, the man is led to notice that the planning and the edification of the city are vain if the planner fails to see what its destination is. The revelation of the path is what points out toward the stars, where the city is meant to be elevated, high in the heavens. The Sanctuary nonetheless shows three different sections of the path that lead to a single destination, three paths that take man through three different houses of being.

Each one of the houses of the Sanctuary forms a piece of the key unlocking the door toward man's destiny. The Sanctuary is the lock, but man's destination is nonetheless to be found somewhere beyond it. Only one piece would be sufficient in order for man to open the door and see what lies beyond it, but each new piece makes the path brighter and easier to walk on. When man appropriates the fullness of the Sanctuary, he is offered an easier access to man's destination than the generations of his forefathers who did not witness the beauty and truth of the sacred spaces. However, like his ancestors, who were not only offered opportunities but also entrusted with responsibilities, the generations that follow the completion of the Sanctuary have been given a mission: to bring the sacred precinct to all parts of the city of being; to erect sacred altars in each one of the houses that stands within its walls.

By bringing the sacred to the remote houses of the



Figure 5.5: *The Sanctuary*.

city, which are entirely profane, the missionaries will invite the previously unreached population to look at the beacon of truth represented by the Sanctuary, inviting all men to step out of their home in order to undertake the journey of the pilgrims who will travel toward the Temple of Adam and will prostrate themselves in front of the altar of Aram or make offerings on the altar of Yawan. But before this can happen, the missionaries have to strive to unite the three parts of the Sanctuary so as to build a harmonious structure in the foreign houses.

The triune nature of the Sanctuary is lost when the missionaries carry it to the profane houses, as what they have been commanded to build needs to fit into a single dwelling, whose unity prohibits the expression of a plurality of worlds. It presupposes a **clash of the holies**, in which the three sacred spaces are confronted with one another in order for a common ground and a common destination to emerge, one that can be transported to every corner of the city. But this does not imply that the product of the clash of the holies would be a perfect image of the Sanctuary. It is indeed not possible, and perhaps even not desirable: the foreign altars built by the missionaries are indeed not meant to replace the sacred precinct that forms the center of the city but is rather meant to be an invitation offered to the inhabitants of all the houses so that they would themselves come as pilgrims to behold the magnificence of the space where the divine presence can be seen and felt.

The missionaries strive to find the unity of the sacred space so that they would be able to build a faithful representation of the heart of the city in every building given to them to visit, but as they erect an altar within its most distant parts, they notice that the product of their hands gives a new life to the Sanctuary: the image of the sacred, constructed within the remote and profane worlds, worlds that have been built upon a part of the earth that significantly differs from the ones upon which the consecrated

space has been revealed, is found to unconceal new aspects of the original structure. The foreign world has grown independently, and it thus has been given the opportunity to be nourished from parts of the earth where no one else has stepped foot or been given the chance to un-veil unique worldly creations. The light of these worlds unconceals peculiarities of both the earth and the world, peculiarities that would not be visible in any other dwelling, but reciprocally, the light that it casts also plunges what lies beyond further into darkness, in the same manner that the light of the sun shines into the eyes of men but thereby also hides the face of the celestial body. An **eclipse** is paradoxically a privileged time to observe the shape and details of the great luminary, and the same goes for the Sanctuary, which is the beacon lighting the worlds of men. The triune nature of the sacred space is concealed when its image is built in the remote dwelling, but this concealment allows some of its aspects to be revealed for the first time.

The freshly built altar un-conceals sections of the path of light that could only be revealed when the blocks of the sacred space are ex-tracted from the place of their origin and carried across to another world, as a diamond taken from the depth of the earth, which can only be seen when it is brought far away from its birthplace, up in the air and in the light of the world. As a direct consequence of this un-concealment, the vision that the missionaries had of the Sanctuary is then trans-formed upon their return, when they bring with them the pilgrims who have been touched by the majesty of the altar, which offered them a first glimpse of the sacred, within the home of their forefathers, a gift showing the benevolence of the strangers as it pointed the way toward the beacon of truth that thrones in the midst of the city that they have yet to explore. As the pilgrims dis-cover the sacred precinct, being introduced into the three houses in which it is contained, they also bring a contribution from their world to the community of men who are serving the Sanctuary. The spark of knowl-

edge that has been revealed to them through the building work of the missionaries can be shared to all those who are gathered inside the holy structure. The pilgrims and the missionaries are led to invite all the servants of the Sanctuary to travel to their distant home so that they would also witness the spark showing the details of the path that can only be seen from within their home.

When the missionaries initiate the first pilgrimage, they therefore also initiate a wave that will be felt throughout the city, reverberated on each one of its buildings and echoed in an infinite series of reflections. Each **wave** of pilgrim takes back with it men who become the guests of their home and then in turn invite other to contemplate its altar so as to enrich the vision of the Sanctuary enjoyed by mankind as a whole. The wave starts from the sacred and it goes through the profane, but the profane, by its multiplicity, thus also becomes the source of an embellishment of the holy place.

Through this wave that is endlessly reverberated, the light of the Sanctuary becomes increasingly clearer, and the dwellers of the city are continuously invited to make the city as a whole their dwelling place, their home. Each house becomes a milestone on the path of their destiny, a place through which they must go through in order to have a clear view of their destination. The richness of the Sanctuary, which is now extended by the altars built across all the city, can be beholden by every man, giving everyone an equal chance to see and to tread on the path of light. More than this, the missionaries and pilgrims can now enjoy a united vision of what they are meant to accomplish with their lives. The path of light points towards the heavens, in a precise direction where man can turn his eyes, and toward which he can focus his building efforts.

The planners of the city, if they have accepted to also be pilgrims and missionaries, can then unite their forces so that the building of the city would not be a random, aimless

work, where structures would grow in all directions, but would instead know a straight **ascent** towards the heavens, not only elevating the city itself but also man as a whole, who would thereby enjoy an always larger horizon of the earth and the skies, while deepening his anchorage in the soil from which he came and toward which he will soon return.

As the planner stands on the rooftop of the city, contemplating the skyline separating the work of his kind from the divine creation, he will be given a chance to ponder the nature of both and the nature of their relation. His eyes feast on the contrast between the product of his hands and the fruits of the divine. They are raptured by the opposition between the sacred and profane spaces opened throughout the city and they are unnerved by the strife between those who are the caretakers of the holies and the rest of the dwellers, who are either too complacent to seek the purpose of their lives or are willingly hindering the work of his fellow planners who are committed to the ascent of man.

The game played under his gaze is nonetheless only at its beginning, and he knows that generations upon generations will either play or be played by the game. Doing his part, he knows that he is walking toward his destination. Towering over the city and continuing to pile up the blocks that would elevate it further, the man nonetheless knows that the city's ascent is only another milestone on man's path and that his destination is not to be found in the building itself...

...But will he look beyond?

Chapter 6

The End of Language

The men who hear the (hi)story of the dwellers of the house of being can only do so from within its walls. As a fire whose warmth can only be felt by those gathered around the hearth, this story can only touch the heart of those who are not only mere prisoners of a house that they are unable to see clearly but rather are men who are conscious of the miraculous nature of their dwelling and of their place within the creation. To hear the story of the man in the house and to see its truth implies that one must see himself as someone either playing or being played by the game whose playing field is the earth.

The game is still ongoing, and we are now living in a city of the being, brought up from infancy in a house among the myriad that forms the dwellings of mankind. The ongoing nature of the game nonetheless does not preclude the possibility of us knowing what the endgame of the creation is, thanks to the revelation given to man in the space opened up in order to receive the outpour of the divine. The Sanctuary lightens the path that man is meant to tread in order to reach his destin-ation, but it also gives him an overview of the game as a whole, from its beginning until its very end. Man's (hi)story as yet to be accom-

plished, but his fate is already sealed, given to all to hear so that individual men would perceive the consequences of their embracing or rejection of their own destiny.

The journeys of the missionaries continued for many generations, and most of the houses of the city of being now contain an altar offering their dwellers a vision of the path of light and an invitation to share the burden of the mission. Countless wars have been waged within the city, conflicts during which men fought, not only to spill the blood of their brethren but also to take control of the city itself. Considering that their own house should be the one dwelt by mankind as a whole, some tried to topple the constructions of their neighbors, forcing them outside of the house of their ancestors so that they would have no choice but to take refuge in the dwelling of their foes. Having failed to elevate themselves so as to gain a larger view of the city that extends to the horizon, they remain blind to the true nature of their shelter, and they hinder the walk of those who are striving to advance on the path of light.

The planner of the city nonetheless restlessly strives for its ascent. Towering over the entirety of what was built by the hands of man, he tries to envision the ultimate form that the city is destined to take. Centered on the Sanctuary, around which the city is meant to gravitate, the multitude of dwellings is re-arranged by the hand of his brethren, under his oversight. Entire neighborhoods are razed in order to give place to new structures that rise and pierce through the clouds, chasing them by their imposing nature. Under the clear blue sky, towers are built to increasingly higher heights, offering the man a horizon larger than anything that the previous generations could fathom. The ancient houses of the world are also re-arrayed by the overseer, with a dense web of bridges connecting the various dwellings while keeping them separate so as to maintain a perfect equilibrium between the need to preserve the independence of the houses, source of their unique contribution

to the city's magnificence, and the need for them to interact with one another so that the city would form a coherent whole, with its entire population striving for the ascension of mankind.

Block after block, house after house, the vision of the planner is realized by the builders and the city is transformed into an architectural marvel. On the top of the high point of man's world, the visionary who completes this transformation once again contemplates the majesty of the work of his kind. The exchanges between the various houses are more intense and efficient as ever, benefiting from their almost perfect distribution across the land. The coherence of the whole structure of the city now renders it almost indestructible, as its foundations penetrate the earth to its core. The bridges indeed ensure that the various dwellings support each other and that any groundless parts of man's world are swiftly identified and dealt with.

No matter the amount of time and efforts that are put into the edification of the city, the dwelling of mankind nonetheless continues to fail to satisfy the aspirations of the sons of Adam. Facing this realization, the man gazing at the activity of his brethren becomes agitated. He faithfully followed the direction pointed out by the Sanctuary, which he knows as well as his homeworld, but after the passing of countless generations of servants who dutifully carried the sacred to every house of the city and brought a myriad of men to join to ranks of the missionaries, there seems to be no end in sight for the work of man's hands. The end of the city is veiled in darkness, even though it now represents the largest and the highest achievement of mankind. It now appears to be without *end*: both an aimless work and one without a conclusion.

Dismayed by the lack of a clear sign indicating that he is on the right track, progressing toward his destination, the man suddenly drops his tools, and he begins to leave his sky-high dwelling, descending back toward the city's

ground-level so as to re-examine the work of his brethren more closely. Frantically wandering across the city, crossing bridges and gazing at the multitude of houses that fill the land, he loses himself in its immensity and intricacy. He struggles to penetrate an increasingly higher number of houses, spending a considerable amount of time to discover their nature, learning them block by block so as to make them his homes. Inebriated by the beauty and diversity of each dwelling and elated by the power that he gains with each new home, he puts all his mind and all his will to progress in the game of worlds, convinced that his destination is to "win" the game and thereby to unlock the secret of his destiny that lays hidden, either in the city or in the earth upon which it is built, waiting to be unearthed and brought into the light of the world.

Even though he devotes all his life to the exploration and the appropriation of different houses, the man still only knows a very small part of the city. Exhausted, out of breath, and lost in the maze built by the hands of his kinsmen, he grows more and more restless. Blocks, bridges, houses, and neighborhoods are passing through his eyes, offering him a blurred vision of the world to which he now pays little attention, caught in the trap of his own reflection, his mind ready to succumb to the pressure of his aspirations that threatens to crush his skull. Everywhere he looks, all that he sees are imperfections in the building blocks of each house into which he steps foot. Forlorn and wearied, the man now sees that the time has come for his frenzied race against himself to end. He has reached the extreme border of the city, the boundary that marks the limit of the land conquered by man's will, the space that can shelter his being and allow the light of the world to illuminate his eyes.

The border of the city is the border of the reunion of all the individual houses that compose it. The outer walls of each house, in turn, represent the place where the

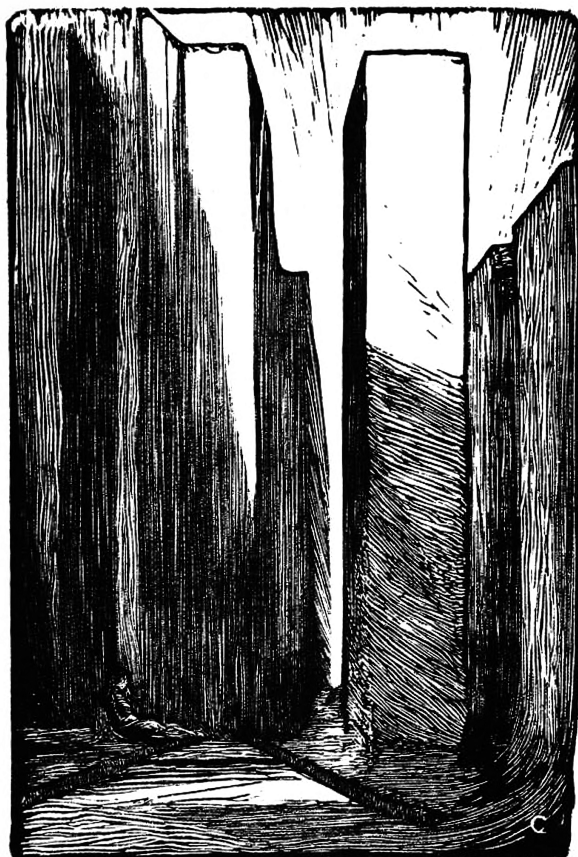


Figure 6.1: *Against the wall.*

house is broken off, delimiting the dwelling of man from the open region that lays beyond it. The place where the house breaks off is also the place where man's vision of the creation is cut off, where his eyes cease to receive the light of the world and are plunged into darkness.

His mind soothed by the support of the wall upon which his body is pressed, the man standing by the wall begins to recover his senses. He slowly and profoundly takes his breath, feeling the fresh air replenish his chest. He then raises his eyes and turns his head around to behold the strangeness of the wall that marks the end of the dwelling of his kind. He immediately notices that the blocks forming this wall possess a peculiar roughness. Their edges betray the struggle waged by their creators, who tenaciously labored to extract and shape raw matter from the soil so as to transform it into something that would accurately represent a particular aspect of the creation, whether it be something found on the earth, in the skies, or in the world itself. The man sees a series of clues on the blocks that betray the state of mind of the artists who fashioned them: dismayed by the result of their efforts, they seemed to have been compelled to put down their chisel, recognizing the impossibility for them to perfect their creation and to make it a faithful representation of what inspired them to create these works. The wall is entirely made of such incomplete but nonetheless fascinating creations. The man is seduced by their coarseness, which contrasts with the orderly and well-polished nature of the inner parts of the city, a coarseness that can only be seen because he decided to leave the elevated position that he occupied, on top of one of the highest point of the city, in order to venture near the earth, where the nature of the buildings blocks of man's creation can be seen and touched.

The man then begins a new kind of ascent by climbing on the outer wall of the city, carefully examining the blocks composing it. They can be seen as butchered repre-

sentations of the perfection of the earth, but their nature soon reveals itself more precious than the finest parts of the Sanctuary, and more enlightening than the largest view of the city's horizon, the one he enjoyed while towering over the dwellings of other men. The blocks of the wall contain cracks where the light of the world is lost, revealing the existence of what lies beyond the house. As the light of the hearth of the world cannot reach beyond the outer wall of the city, all that the man can see through the cracks is darkness.

Intrigued by this sight, or rather this absence of sight, the man begins to climb on the wall, moving back toward the heavens while scrutinizing the dark fractures that cover it. Mesmerized by the spectacle of the contrast between the blocks and the fissures, the brightness of the world and the pitch-dark nature of the unknown found beyond the boundaries of the city, the man accelerates the pace of his ascent, pondering the meaning of the contrast between the black and white spaces passing through his eyes. What is to be found beyond the wall of the world? Will he be able to venture into this mysterious region? The excitement of the ascent does not put him in a position propitious to reflection but soon enough, once he has examined a large part of the blocks composing the outer walls of the city, the man's hands reach the limit of the limit, the top of the wall that separates the world of men from something else, another realm. He pulls his body over the last blocks and his feet are now trampling the edge of the world. Raising himself up, his gaze sweeping over the horizon, he stands in awe before the vision of the familiar landscape, whose contrast unmistakably and strikingly resembles something he already saw. The sight of the city's glazing light, which is carried away up towards the skies, now stands out from the profound darkness that surround the shelters of man, in the same manner that the shadow in the fractures in the walls stood out from the radiance of its blocks. The scale of this new contrast is nonetheless other-worldly: it extends

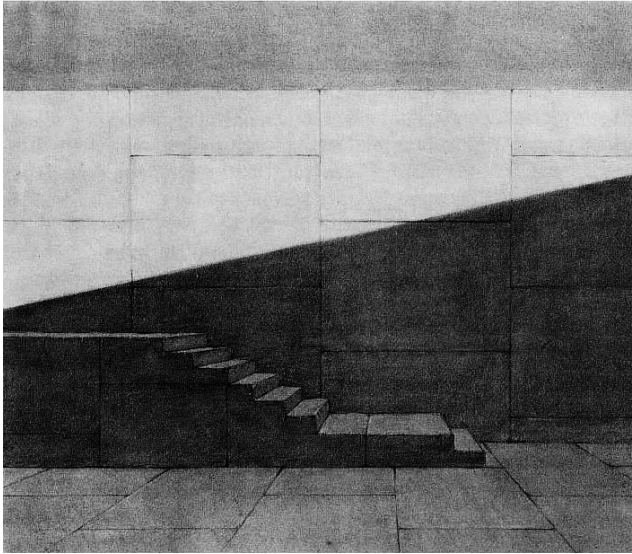


Figure 6.2: *The Edge*.

to the horizon. No matter where the man turns his head, all that he can see is a cliff of light upon which he stands and the abyss that encompasses all that he can see: the city, the earth upon which it is built, the skies under which they stand.

The knife of the twilight cleaves man's horizon in two, following a horizontal line that encompasses the city and all its inhabitants. The inscrutable darkness keep all their secrets, but paradoxically, their sight already brings light to the man on the wall. Before facing the abyss beyond the wall, he never truly noticed the brightness of the city, whose intensity now appears to be as oppressive as it is comforting. His mind is struck by this newfound nature of his dwelling, of his home: what had been a source of light illuminating his world and his life, the shelter of his own being, now casts a gigantic shadow over all that lies beyond its walls. The very thing that allowed him to see the creation is now a thing that prevents him from unveiling it further, as if the man had been fed enough of the fulfilling

sight of the universe and now had to be weaned from it.

The light of the world is now perceived as a noise that deafens man, preventing him from hearing the sound of the abyss. It appears as a blazing glare that blinds him to what lies beyond the cleared land upon which the city is built. He is a hatchling, and the city is a protective shell that allowed him to slowly grow and develop himself, but now that the city has become too narrow to shelter his appetite for unveilings, his thirst for unconcealments, it now appears as a coffin, a place where he cannot deploy his wings and that delays his flight towards the heavens, which is the destiny of the birds.

The man standing on the wall nonetheless has yet to discover a way out of the city. Its walls indeed surround the dwellings of men, sealing the city shut, without any door from which the darkness beyond the walls could penetrate the precinct of men or from which men may escape their comfortable prison and venture into the unknown. The man nonetheless knows that prior to being able to venture outside of the city, he must lift up the shadowy veil that envelops the land beyond. He needs to chase the darkness that holds sway over this mysterious land away, and he knows that a source of light is what is needed for this task. The light of the world, the “thing” that illuminates his home and the city as a whole, is nonetheless useless beyond the walls, as it cannot reach what is outside of the world of men.

The wall is a **wall of silence**, a place marking the boundary where the noise of the city is extinguished; where the activities of men are put to a standstill. The bustling city nevertheless does not become any less noisy or less bright because of the man’s presence on the top of the wall. The man therefore begins to devise a plan, a strategy that would allow him to see beyond the edge of his world. Enlightened by the contrast formed by the horizon present in front of his eyes, by the darkness facing the blinding light

of his kind, the man slowly realizes that it is his very nature as a dweller of a house of being that illuminates the world around, and thus blinds him to the land beyond the walls. But his home is not a place that he can leave at will, as his own being is intricately intertwined with its architecture. The man is nonetheless far from powerless as he faces his dwelling. He has found a way out, one that does not require the destruction of his home, or even a complete departure from it, as he knows that it is not possible nor desirable: he cannot leave the world, but he can strive to cover it, to place a veil over its building blocks so that the light of the world would be quenched, dimmed until the blindness it induced is broken.

After a time of reflection, the man takes the first preparatory step that will allow him to free himself from his house of being, whose horizon has now become too small for him. His eyes are already turned toward the abyss, the darkness whose mystery is now more enticing than the bland clarity of the city, which is laid bare for all to see, naked and constantly scrutinized by the gaze of every man, woman, and child. Seeking to escape the light in order to pierce through the darkness, he meticulously enshrouds each one of the blocks standing in front of him, and whose light contributes to his blindness of what is beyond the walls. In each one of the houses that he dwells in, he covers the windows that are open toward the creation, the blocks that allowed him to be who he is and to see what stands in contrast with himself. With each masking of a part of a house, the amount of light that reaches his eyes is diminished. More than this, the dark shroud that man places over the blocks also partially severs his ties with them, freeing him from their influence, which helped him grow into the man he is now, but which also now hinders his progress on the path and imprisons him. Veiling after veiling, covering after covering, his eyes are given an increasingly greater comfort, while his body becomes liberated following the shattering of the shackles that tied him to each part of the dwellings



Figure 6.3: *The Quenching.*

he called home. Encouraged by the signs felt in his flesh, the growing sense of serenity and calmness that comes with the quenching of the light of the world and the severing of the dependency with his homes, he continues his work of extinction, his work of smothering of a world whose light has grown into an uncontrolled fire that threatens to ravish man's soul.

Marking the pace of man's walk toward the appropriation of the abyss, each extinction is a blow struck at the city. The dropping down of each veil echoes against the walls, louder and louder as the noise of the world is silenced by the shutting of the windows opened toward the creation. Finally, when most of what occupied the man's vision since his infancy has been concealed behind the thick and dark veils that do not let anything escape from them, a last "thing" remains. In the midst of his home, one of the last blocks that are still showering him with light is one

that is unique in its appearance: the mirror, the window opened toward his own *ego*, letting him contemplate his own nature and see himself standing in the midst of the house of being, in the city, and in the creation as a whole.

Looking at the mirror that reflects his own image into his eyes, the man notices that he himself is a source of light that illuminates the world, thereby also concealing what lies beyond it. His own *ego* is one of the pillars that allow the house to stand and that allow him to be who he is today: a creature that strives to see its own place within the creation and to see its destination. It is because of this mirror that he can now realize that there is something missing from his world, that there is something more than what he has been given to see through the building blocks of his house of being. Now, the vision of himself in this mirror nonetheless disturbs him. He is distraught by the realization that he himself is part of the cause of the concealment of whatever lies beyond the walls. The light of his own *ego* is the main source casting the shadows hiding the rest of the path that he feels compelled to follow. All of his being knows that he is meant to step out of the city that sheltered him from as long as he can remember. He therefore knows that he must perform a last but most important veiling: the quenching of the light of his own *ego*. As the man with great care envelops the mirror with a massive cloth, the reflection that taught him his own place within the city is faded, disappearing into the shadows, breaking the last shackle tying him to the city and thereby finally freeing him from the strongest trap of the world.

With the curtain of darkness finally covering every “thing” seen by the man inside the city of being, the light of the world has now been sufficiently extinguished for his eyes to be at rest. Plunged entirely into the shadows, the distinction between the city and the abyss beyond it has now faded. All that surrounds him appears to be an endless mystery. He is blind to the world, but his senses have

not been dulled by the darkness that now hold sway over him. On the contrary, the breaking of the bonds with the “things” of the world appears to enhance his sensibility to what can be felt but cannot be seen. He knows that he is still standing on the walls of the city of being. He can feel his feet securely anchored on the ground, the earth from which both his body and his home are made. He can sense the skies through the embrace of the winds gently caressing his cheeks. As he is filled with the bliss of this newfound experience of the creation, the man is then struck by a lightning bolt that pierces through his head and goes straight through his heart. Far from hurting him, it represents the culmination of the experience he has begun to go through, his wandering in the darkness that makes him feel the creation as a part of himself. A smile on his face, he lets himself be permeated by this fire from heaven, something that he knows to be a sign from the divine.

When the lightning bolt finishes its course deep into the earth and the darkness returns, something new nonetheless begins to appear. High in the skies, the curtain of the firmament begins to fold, revealing a multitude of stars, softly twinkling and spraying minute rays of light throughout the skies. Descending onto the world of men and the whole earth that surrounds it, these rays of light are hopping, bouncing upon whatever is to be found above the ground, before finishing their journey into the man’s pupil, thereby showing him the parts of the creation that they explored.

The stars have always towered high above the earth and their light has always visited man’s eyes, but the feeble nature of their brilliance rendered them invisible until then. Caught in the overflow of light radiating from the city, the twinkling of the army of the distant celestial bodies remained unnoticed, but now that the light of the world has been quenched, the starlight now holds sway, not only over the city, man’s world, but over the creation as a whole. It illuminates the earth and the skies, unveiling what was

concealed by the work of men. Standing on the walls of the city, the man finally begins to peer through the darkness beyond the walls.

As the twinkling of the stars becomes more apparent, the veil covering the mysterious abyss is slowly lifted away. To the man's surprise, what is revealed is not a bottomless pit, nor a fearful vision of what man's universe would be without the world built by the hands of his forefathers. What stands in front of his eyes is the **countr-y**, the open region standing in **contr-ast** with the city. The countr-y is where nature holds sway, the **counterpoint** to the world of men, the city, where the tools in man's hands, and the *techniques* that he developed, appear to be the supreme ruler of all.

The splendor of the countr-y is now visible, as the land beyond the walls is dimly but clearly lit by the stars above. What the man sees is a boundless **no-thing-ness**. Not the emptiness of an abyss, as his eyes are replete with the rich palette of colors and forms that compose the countr-y, but rather a region whose continuity, cohesion, and harmony render its cutting out into parts impossible. The city is where the unity of the creation is fractured so as to simplify its infinite complexity and to make it intelligible to man, as a set of "things." In contrast with the city, the place where meaningful "things" are everywhere, the countr-y is the great wilderness, the land that is full of life but contains no individual "things," only a majestic totality.

The starlight that appeared following the quenching of the light of the city offers the man a first glimpse of the countr-y. As he is now almost free from the yoke of the world, he can be initiated to the experience of the wild region of the creation, the experience of nature. He cannot and does not need to leave his world in order to **en-counter** the countr-y. He is forever bound to the veiled structure that lays under the thick veil masking the blinding light emitted by the work of man's hands, but this is

of no importance for his progress on the path toward his destination: as the fiery city has been concealed and its power over man considerably reduced, it is the country itself that comes to him.

Contrary to the city, which relentlessly bombards man with teachings and visions of “things” that should be learned and used, the country does not have such pretensions. It only offers an experience to those who have freed themselves from the glare of the world, the experience of a place that stands against the city, but in which nothing stands against anything else. Its totalizing nature makes it an ideal location to see what unites the creation: the earth, the world, the skies, man, and the divine. Without any distinction between them, but only a continuous movement of growth, the man can appropriate what the world taught him was distinct from him, and which he now feels as an extension of himself.

Having released the grip on his *ego* and having begun to experience the blessing of the life in the country, the man can now see his place in the creation. The city gave him the opportunity to be a human being, a creature standing out from the oneness of the creation, but paradoxically, the fact of facing the country, the land where he cannot *be himself*, be with his *self*, opens him up to the experience of his essential being, what he was always meant to *be*.

Still standing on the walls separating the city from the country, the man is now conscious of his dual root. He is a creature born in the city, the shelter that protected him from the harshness of the life in the wilderness, allowing him to mature into a man, willing and able to transcend the limitations of the dwelling in which he was raised by his parents and his people. He is also called to live in the neighborhood of the country, the land where one can be raptured by the divine and be left unable to distinguish it from his self. Caught between the two poles of the creation, the man nonetheless knows that the city is only a

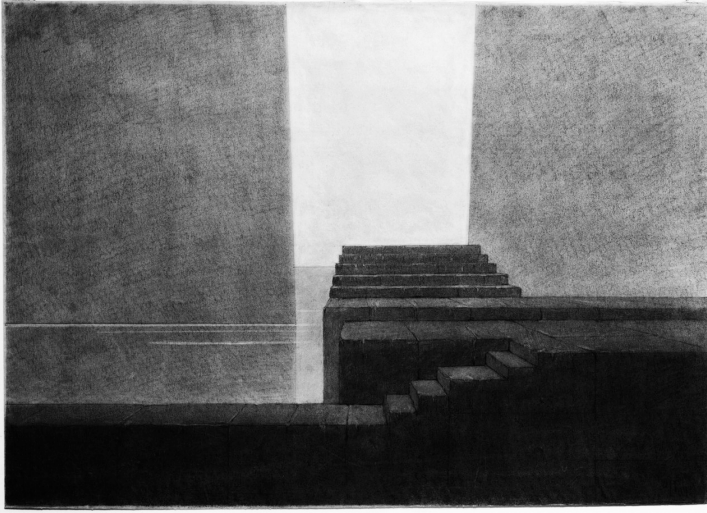


Figure 6.4: *The Beyond.*

means given to man to appropriate the countr-y. The city is indeed built on and entirely surrounded by the countr-y, which encompasses all men and all that was created by their hands. The countr-y nonetheless remains invisible and unseen until the emergence of the man and his *ego*, which form something standing out and in contrast with the wilderness.

Caught in a tug of war between city and countr-y, the man on the wall is in **ec-stasy**, standing out from both and the means through which both can be unconcealed. This ec-stasy shows him the two sides of the fall of his kind, initiated by his distant parents: both what man lost through their transgression and where he is now. More than the appearance of death in the life of man, the first sin also broke the link between man and divine being. The first man was born in the neighborhood of the divine, experiencing the tug of war between his house, his world, and his *ego* on the one hand, and the unity of divine being on the other. When the first couple violated the first sacred space within the house of being, they released their bond

with the divine so as to entirely plunge themselves into the contemplation of their house, in which their *ego* occupied the most prominent place.

The vision of the state of mankind momentarily plunges the man on the wall in despair, as he finally perceives the true nature of the fall of his kind, and of himself, who lived his life away from his essential being, away from the place that he was always destined to occupy within the creation. The man is unsettled by the weight of his own sins, of his rejection of the divine, but he is soon elated at the realization that his life of rebellion against his true nature has now come to an end. His hands are firmly holding the chain tying him to both the city of being and the countr-y, the land of man's un-being, where his *ego* is powerless and man is one with the earth, the skies, the world and the divine.

A smile on his face, the man on the wall has seen and reached his destin-ation. The long walk is finished and the time to rejoice has come, as he now becomes a fully conscious manifestation of divine being, on the earth and in the world of men. Transcending the limits of his world, his mind (νοῦς) experienced a transition, from an organ pondering the world (νοῖα) toward a mode of being that goes *beyond* (μετά) the wall of the city of being: a true repentance (μετά-νοῖα), a conversion of his mind, which is now entirely dedicated to the fulfillment of its essential being.

The tension between the man's *ego* and divine being has been restored, and he thus has reached his life's destination. He will nonetheless still have to face the consequence of the fall of his forefathers. The dusk of life will soon come to him, taking his flesh back to the earth from which it arose at the dawn of his life. He now sees his own nature, as water searching for water, not a mere part of the whole but rather fully one with it. He therefore knows no fear and patiently awaits the dusk, the great sleep during which he will lay deep inside the earth, before being called back to

life for the last day.

The man on the wall has seen what lied beyond... but he is a mere drop in the ocean of being. Many among his forefathers also reached the same destin-ation as he has: they stood on the same wall, even though the city had yet to be constructed. It may have been a barely standing, crude pile of blocks, or already a sophisticated dwelling, part of the village of being. The more developed was the world built by mankind, the easier was it for men to see its limits and to try to see the countr-y beyond its walls, but at any stage of the growth of mankind men were able to seize back the bond with divine being and repair what was damaged through the rejection of the destiny of mankind by the first couple.

The story of man has nonetheless yet to be completed. The rest of mankind has to finish its long walk, and only then will the end be revealed to all men, those living on the earth and the dead resting inside it; those who have reached their destin-ation, and those who have strayed from the path toward their essential being...

Chapter 7

The Apo-calyipse

A considerable number of moons, seasons and years have come and gone. The skies enveloping the earth now begin to darken, as a prelude to the dusk of mankind that is drawing near. The city of being is still bustling with noise and filled with the light of the world that illuminates each one of its corners and shines into the eyes of men, offering them a crude caricature of the creation. Most men are still busying themselves with its edification, also waging an endless battle to win more influence, more power over their brethren and over the earth. A few astute observers of the creation have joined the silent battalion of the men standing on the wall, calmly resting between the city and the countr-y beyond it, which remains unseen and unknown to a majority of dwellers.

Rev
8:1-2

The clash of egos that continues inside the walls is soon interrupted by a sign from the heavens. A deafening sound is heard throughout the city: the sound of trumpets, marking the beginning of the end for those who have rejected their destiny, puffing up their egos and ignoring the call to restore their bond with the divine. When the echo of the trumpets has faded away, the beast is then unleashed upon the earth. It soon conquers both the earth and the world,

Rev
13:7

taking control over the city of being and exercising its dominion over its population, putting the senseless quarrels of men to an abrupt end. Under the reign of the beast, the city is plunged into fear. What resembled an anthill, filled with continuous chains of people walking its bridges and building its walls, now appears as a frozen image of its former glory. The lethargy of the population is nonetheless only apparent, when it is seen from afar. Inside the house and inside the chest of most men, hearts are burning with apprehension and awe.

Standing still in one of the houses, a man raises his eyes toward the translucent roof that shows him a vision of the skies, where thick and dark clouds are approaching, soon to hover above his dwelling. Terrified, wanting to run far away and hide from the impending doom that threatens him and his kind, he is nonetheless paralyzed by the gaze of the beast that maintains order and in front of which no one dares to move. His eyes now contemplate the home in which he spent most of his life, his family and friends who are nearby. He suddenly is struck by the futility of his past endeavors, the vanity of his life's work: the edification of this house, which he knows will soon be the object of the wrath of the skies. He knows that he is lost and that it is now too late for him to find back the path from which he strayed. In despair, unable to change his fate, he stands still inside his home, carefully observing the movements of the beast roaming through the city.

The beast visited the Sanctuary and decimated the pilgrims who stood in the sacred precinct, those who were honoring the divine and seeking the path toward it. It also built a cursed place standing in front of the Sanctuary so as to lead the dwellers of the city to prostrate themselves before the structure it contains. The beast indeed created blocks from the earth in order to insult the divine and lead man away from it.

The man standing in fear in the midst of his home



Figure 7.1: *Signs.*

is unable to see beyond the walls of the city. His world ends at the horizon of man's creation, where the beast is now a supreme ruler, and he therefore has lost any hope of salvation. An obedient servant of what appears to be the strongest power of his world, the man submits to the commands of the beast: he profanes the Sanctuary. He strikes the sacred altars, and spits inside the Temple. Ruled by fear and by the love of his own *ego*, he is blind to his own nature and deaf to the call of the divine. The subservience of the man is nonetheless without effect on his fate. Soon enough, the clouds above the city are turning to a bright red and the fire from heaven begins to be poured down on the dwelling of mankind. Brimstones are passing through the air and are crashing down on the earth, taking with them men, women and children, young and old, righteous or wicked, indiscriminately bringing them back to the earth from which they all came.

The wrath of fire from the heavens leaves various parts of the man's home unsupported. Entire sections of his dwelling are now crumbling before his eyes, and the blocks forming them are immediately swallowed by the earth, never

to be seen again. Even the walls coated with cement, the parts that stand by themselves, without the need to be constantly supported by the hands of men, begin to be shattered as the earth itself is ravaged by the fire that is now spreading inside the buildings of the city. The heritage of mankind, the work of the men who returned to the earth long ago, is now wasting away, joining their creators in their resting place. The house is laid bare, with large gaps in its structure, and it is now wide open toward the skies. Its foundations are cracked, leaving the naked earth to be seen in its heart. This crumbling, this destruction of man's world, nonetheless do not increase man's horizon. On the contrary, the damage suffered by his home blinds him to large portions of the creations, as he cannot receive the light from many of its building blocks, which have now vanished into oblivion.

The blindness that begins to affect the man who stands shivering in his home as a result of the ongoing destruction of his house of being nevertheless does not bring him any comfort. His eyes are wide open, seeing the twilight of his world and the doom that impends him, as he stands, powerless. Unrepentant, convinced of the necessity to submit to the beast, his lack of vision has now sealed his fate. As an eagle plunging to snatch its prey standing defenseless on the soil of a plain, the rain of fire is now poured upon the man. His flesh is melted, revealing for an instant what he is made of, before quickly turning him to ashes, which are then scattered across the earth by a burning gust of wind.

In another part of the city, which now appears more and more like a ruin following the passing of the rain of fire that wastes away all that it touches, the building blocks of the house and its inhabitants, another man is standing. Not a man standing in fear, looking for a refuge in the most inner parts of his home, but rather one standing on the top of one of its walls, neither proud nor withdrawn. He is not oblivious to the downfall of the world, but only detached

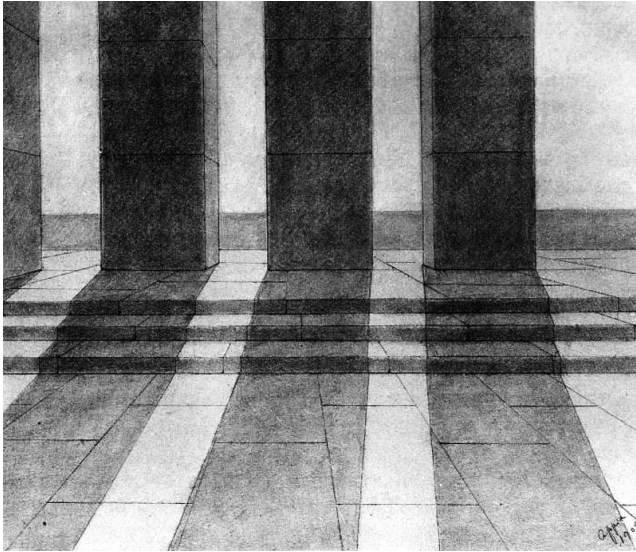


Figure 7.2: *Horizon.*

from his *self*. He is focused on the task that he has been given by fate. His eyes are fixed upon the horizon, the line that separates the city from the countr-y; that separates the remnant of his *ego*, to which he is softly clinging with one hand, from the divine being toward which his other hand is extended. In equilibrium on the edge of the world, he constantly strives to maintain the tension and the balance between the two poles of his horizon.

The man on the wall is a witness of the destruction brought on by the fiery tempest upon the creation as a whole. Earth and world, city and countr-y, all experience the wrath delivered from the heavens by the winds. This eerie vision nonetheless does not distract nor unsettle him. Having reached his own destin-ation, he is without worries. He is aware of the presence of death, which faces him and is drawing closer and closer as the dusk of man approaches, but far from terrifying him, he already welcomes death, opening his arms to embrace it. He indeed knows that his encounter with this counterpart to life is necessary for him.

He longs for the return to the earth and the completion of his existence, the return to the ocean of which he is nothing but a drop that briefly escaped it.

As a giant, fiery boulder is piercing through the thick layer of clouds hovering above the city, heading toward the wall on which the man is standing, he remains steady, seeing his return to the source approaching at great speed. The boulder soon smites the wall, crushing the man and carrying his flesh deep into the soil, burying him together with the work of his forefathers. His tombstone is made of the building blocks of his own home, marking the man's departure from the land of the living, having completed his destiny and having dutifully played his part in the creation until his last breath.

The blazing hail continues to pound the earth. The flaming rain floods the streets of the city of being, reducing entire sections of it to ashes. Even the heart of the city, the Sanctuary that served as the beacon of light of mankind, is not spared by the winds of destruction. All that is not supported by the hands of the living wastes away, leaving only a frail skeleton of the city's former glory, a skeleton under which the pilgrims are congregated, either frightened or serenely waiting for the end.

Once the fiery vault of the skies has been emptied and the scorching winds return to their hiding place, silence and calm come back to the city. Man's dwelling place now lies in ruins and most of its population has been taken away back to the depth of the earth. Scattered men nonetheless remain standing in various parts of the world. Some are still prisoners of the walls of their home, while others continue to stand upon these walls from which they can not only contemplate the extent of the cataclysm that shook the creation to its core but also carry on the mission entrusted to them. These men, who were transformed into pillars of truth by their disaffection for their own glory, remained undisturbed by the carnage around them. Now that

a certain peace returns to the earth and the world, their behavior does not change. They appear unaffected by the mutation of the creation, in the flow of which they are caught, without offering any resistance, their eyes fixed upon the light of the stars above that are bathing the country beyond the ruins of the work of mankind.

Rev
20:4

As the city is filled with stillness and silence, a loud roar is heard throughout the land, coming from the entrails of the earth. Shaking the rubbles that are scattered around the world of men, the growling of the earth announces the return of those who had been swallowed by it. From the parched soil that has been plowed by the anger of the skies, the bones of the departed are suddenly reemerging. The dead arise and their bodies are flooding the ruins of the city of being. All those who have walked the earth since the dawn of man are there, assembled among the remnants of their homes, the place in which they spent their lives and relentlessly built, extending the modest abode of the first man into a vast expanse of buildings reaching to the horizon. They are back to their home, the exact place where they were struck down and from which they were taken to the great slumber of death. Those who were still prisoners of their dwelling, lost between the walls of their home, are back to their familiar cell, while those who reached their destination and stood upon its walls, between city and country, are also back to the place they were given to occupy by the providence. But both have lost all their earthly possessions. They are now naked, their nature laid bare for all to see. The hammer and the chisel, the tools allowing them to take the earth to edify the world, have also been taken from them. The dusk of man is coming, and the time to work has now ended.

Most of the product of man's hands, the fruit of the work of generations upon generations of men, has disappeared forever. All that now remains are the parts of the world to which the living and the dead clung until their

heart stopped beating. According to these visible remnants showing what was at the center of the hearts of men, all will now be judged. The nature of the building blocks of their home to which they clung at the end of their lives determines their lot. Mankind will be divided in two, but not through an external intervention: by their own deeds, during their lives, did they already unknowingly separate themselves.

Mat
12:36–
37

The men who failed to follow the path pointed out by the Sanctuary and by the signs found all across the earth and the skies return to their home, sheltered from the elements but blind to the nature of the creation and to their own place in it. They never experienced the bliss of the vision of what lies beyond the city, and they never will. Their fate is now sealed: they will forever remain prisoners of their own dwelling, where their *ego* is the omphalos of their world. They have missed their chance to enjoy the nearness to the countr-y and to feel their unity with divine being. They won't even be able to take refuge in the clouds of their own illusions, in the mirage that they were used to building in order to escape their duty and the burden of their role to play. Indeed, once the departed have all come out from the depth of the earth and returned to the place where their faced death, the soft and malleable soil upon which the city was built and from which men were formed is turned into stone. Naked, without their tools, and now standing upon a rigid and unalterable floor, they are condemned to remain still within their home, unable to build, and therefore also unable to create a refuge to which they could flee so as to avoid facing their irreparable mistake.

Rev
21:1

Other men, those who followed the path and embraced their destiny, on the other hand, are standing high upon the walls of the city in ruin, which are now unattainable to those on the ground below. They are also living on the new earth, the rigid foundation that replaced the one

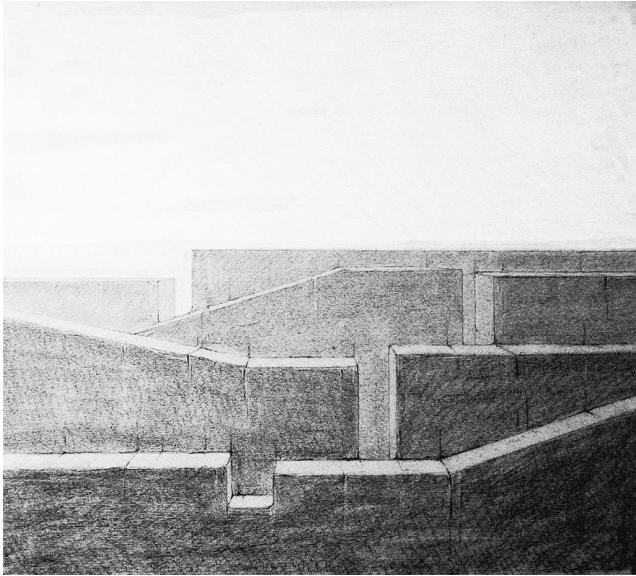


Figure 7.3: *Remnant.*

that passed away, but they are almost unaffected by this renewal of their surroundings. They continue to incarnate the tension between earth and world, city and countr-y, which gives the creation its meaning. They are what stands out from the divine, and what stands against the divine, but they are also one with it: they are like the surface of the ocean, whose contact with the air makes it different from the body of the waters, but which is still made of water, nonetheless.

In the heart of the city of being, where a large part of mankind is prisoner of its own home and where the deserted ruins of the Sanctuary stand as a monument to their neglect of the sacred, an imposing structure thrones, undamaged by the destruction that obliterated most of the city. As the men scattered around the lower parts of the city peer through this simple but grim, translucent block that is now so monumental that they cannot avoid its light, they are given a vision of the beast. As their eyes get accustomed to the terrifying sight, they nonetheless begin to see more.

The details of the skin of the beast are now getting clearer and what they see is more horrifying than anything they saw before. What the reflection on the glossy scales covering the creature reveals is their own image. It unconceals their own wickedness: they are all part of the beast, whose name is —**ἐγώ**. Their bond with the divine now forever severed, they are chained to this block, forced to contemplate their own image. They are now prisoners of their own self, to which they devoted their lives and to which they consecrated their world.

Soon after the petrification of the earth, the new world sees the appearance of a new sign, one coming from the heavens and standing in contrast to the earthly monument erected in the midst of the city. A blazing sun that shines throughout the skies and that showers the earth with its warmth. It blinds and scorches the men who are chained to their own *egos*, in the inner parts of the city above which it hovers. For the men standing on the outer walls, at a distance from this heavenly sign, its light warms their flesh and their heart, while their eyes are filled with the wondrous sight of the countr-y, which is now seen in its full splendor, rather than dimly lit by the twinkling of the stars above.

Rev
22:4

Only the men on the walls are in a position to stare directly at this heavenly sign, without being blinded by its proximity. As one body and one mind, they all turn as one man towards this great luminary of the world. What they discern in the flood of light that ensues is the reflection of the whole creation: the earth, the skies, the city, the countr-y, and divine being. They also perceive their own image and the one of their brethren on the edge of the world. Struck like strings tensed near their breaking point by the new sun of the world, the sound of being resounds throughout the city, shaking what is left of it before fading on the horizon of the countr-y. At this instant, they incline their bodies toward the sign of the divine. All that their eyes now see is the white light of the sun, but they can feel the final

transformation that they are experiencing. They are all waves in the ocean of divine being. They stood out from the ocean so that the body of the waters could be seen by an extension of itself. Curled upon itself, desperately trying to free itself from its source, it sees its own re-flection on the surface of the ocean, thereby witnessing its own existence and the nature of the whole of which it belongs. Once the wave has reached its peak, the farthest distance from which it can be separated from the ocean, it continues to curl itself, deeply bowing towards the whole of the ocean and toward its own re-flection. When the bow is complete, the wave then disappears, fading away and being merged back to the ocean.

Appendix A

A glossary of poetic terms

The story that was told in the preceding pages contains a certain number of terms that possess a dual meaning. They are all very familiar words, found at the most basic level of the English language, and yet they are here used in ways that may appear significantly different than the way they are used in our everyday lives. These words all possess a fundamental meaning that is easily understood, as they can all be related to an experience common to mankind as a whole. This story has also shown that these words can also be used more poetically, revealing a complementary meaning that can help man relate more abstract, more meta-physical concepts to the realm of his daily sensory experiences.

This poetic use, which attempts to enrich the horizon of man's world, may nonetheless appear disconcerting, as it takes time to appropriate the link between the poetic and the technical, the sensory and meta-physical. This is why the following glossary will attempt to expose several key poetic terms in an explicit and relatively complete manner, something that was not possible in the story itself, as it

would have broken its poetic nature. When these concepts have been borrowed or inspired by the work of others, Heidegger in particular, references to these authors have been inserted so that the reader can explore the source from which they were taken.

Altar

Within a house, that is, a construction that is dwelt in by men looking to be sheltered from the power of the skies, the altar is the place that stands out from the profane, from man and his everydayness. It is where the sacred, the holy can be found, in a space opened up by man so as to welcome it. It is a sacred temple within a profane house, the place where the god is *present*:

This presence of the god is in itself the extension and delimitation of the precinct as a holy precinct. The temple and its precinct, however, do not fade away into the indefinite. It is the temple-work that first fits together and at the same time gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape of destiny for human being.¹

¹ Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001: 40–41. Print; Original German: “Dieses Anwesen des Gottes ist in sich die Ausbreitung und Ausgrenzung des Bezirkes als eines heiligen. Der Tempel und sein Bezirk verschweben aber nicht in das Unbestimmte. Das Tempelwerk fügt erst und sammelt zugleich die Einheit jener Bahnen und Bezüge um sich, in de-

The altar is thus more than the place that welcomes the sacred: it is the place where the whole can be beheld, where the meaning of the creation can shine and be seen by men.

The altar is also the place in front of which man prostrates himself, and that is not to be touched by his hand. It is meant to remain and pass through the ages so that new generations would behold the presence of the sacred among the profane. In a house of being, the altar is the sacred text, the language that is a manifestation of the holy, no matter whether it was built by the hands of man or directly was revealed to him.

Cement

When blocks of stone are piled up in great numbers, the resulting structure inevitably requires the support of many men, who will prevent its crumbling with their bare hands. In a house of being that does not know the art of writing, signs that are not kept in man's memory are always under threat of disappearing. Constant attention is required in order for signs to pass through time or through space.

Man nonetheless may invent ways to render superfluous the support of his hands, such as cement. Coated with cement, the blocks may stand on their own, and resist the onslaught of time or of the elements. Writing is the cement of the house of being. It allows man to make his creations virtually indestructible and to considerably extend the size of his house. The ap-

nen Gehurt und Tod, Unheil und Segen, Sieg und Schmach, Ausharren und Verfall —dem Menschenwesen die Gestalt seines Geschickes gewinnen." From: GA 5: 27–28.

pearance of this invention not only leads to a radical transformation of the house itself but also to deep changes in man's relationship to his world.

City

When the dwellers of different houses begin to bring their abodes together so as to form a community, they become inhabitants of a **village**. A village is a small group of houses, disorderly arrayed according to the order of their construction on a common parcel of land. As villages grow in size and in age, their inhabitants are bound to yearn for greater coherence, a precise organization that would lessen the chaos and the inefficiency of the growing structures. When man begins to reshape the houses and change their distance relative to the others, a village in which they are located then becomes a city.

For St Augustine: "a city is nothing more than a single-minded multiplicity of individual men"² or "a group of men united by some bond of fellowship."³ Here, we find a supplementary insight into the nature of the city. It is not only characterized by a certain order of its structure, but also by a bond between its inhabitants, who are called to unite their strengths and their will so that mankind and the city would form a whole that tends toward a single destination.

Countr-y

² Original Latin: "cum aliud civitas non sit quam concors hominum multitudo"; Original and translation from: Henderson, Jeffrey. "AUGUSTINE, The City of God against the Pagans." *Loeb Classical Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Dec. 2016.

³ Original Latin: "civitas, quae nihil est aliud quam hominum multitudo aliquo societatis vinculo conligata." From: *Ibid*.

The countr-y is the “open-region” that stands in contrast to the city, but in which the city is built. As Heidegger’s concept of “open-region” (*das Gegnet*), the countr-y is “itself what first grants all lodging,”⁴ and what “surrounds us and shows itself to us as the horizon.”⁵ It is also the place where “no-thing-ness” holds sway. There are no “things” in the countr-y, as “things” belong to the world and to the city.

Man needs the city in order to be human. He needs the “things” of the world and the walls of his home to see the creation, but he is called to let himself be seduced by the countr-y life, by its serenity and its silence. He is destined to find a balance between city and countr-y, the world of “things” and the great “no-thing-ness” beyond its walls.

Earth

On a technical level, the earth is the matter that fills the universe, but poetically, it is more than this. As Heidegger tells us: “What this word means here is far removed from the idea of a mass of matter and from the merely astronomical idea of a planet. Earth is that in which the arising of everything that arises is brought back — as, indeed, the very thing that it is — and sheltered.”⁶ The earth “is the coming-

⁴ Heidegger, Martin. *Country Path Conversations*. Indiana University Press, 2010: 73. Print; Original German: “was alle Unterkunft erst gewährt.” From: GA 77: 113.

⁵ Ibid.^t: 78; Original German: “Als Horizont umgibt uns und zeigt sich uns die Gegnet.” From: GA 77: 121.

⁶ Heidegger, Martin. *Heidegger: Off the Beaten Track*. Cambridge University Press, 2002: 21. Print; Original German: “Von dem, was das Wort hier sagt, ist sowohl die Vorstellung einer abgelagerten Stoffmasse als auch die nur astronomische eines Planeten fernzuhalten. Die Erde ist das, wohin das Aufgehen alles Aufgehende

forth-concealing [Hervorkommend-Bergende]. Earth is that which cannot be forced, that which is effortless and untiring. On and in the earth, historical man finds his dwelling in the world.”⁷ The earth is located under the skies, and it is based on them, sheltered by the space that they open up. The earth nonetheless also forms the ground upon which man’s world is built. His house of being is a space protruding away from the earth, and yet this house is also made of earth.

Furthermore, the earth is the womb from which man comes into the world. His own body is entirely made out of it, and once he has gone through the days allotted to him, man’s breath leaves him and he return to the earth, in the long sleep of death.

Home

Man can visit different houses, but in order for a house to become a home, it needs to be fully appropriated by its dweller. A home is familiar, and man does not need to search for anything in it: all the things in it are easily accessible to him. His home forms a part of himself and an extension of his own body, in contrast to the other houses around him, which he must first dis-cover if he wants to know and inhabit them. Every man has a home: the house in which he was raised from his infancy.

House

und zwar als ein solches zurückhirt. Im Aufgehenden west die Erde als das Bergende,” from: GA 5: 28.

⁷ Ibid.^t: 24; Original German: “Sie ist das Hervorkommend-Bergende. Die Erde ist das zu nichts gedrängte Mühelose-Uermüdliche. Auf die Erde und in sie gründet der geschichtliche Mensch sein Wohnen in der Welt,” from GA 5: 32.

A house is a building that shelters man. He dwells in it because it opens up a space that allows him to be protected and that frees his mind from the dangers outside. It is built by his hands, but it is more than a tool at his disposal, as he does not wield his house: he is rather contained in it. Man's horizon is limited by its walls, and he can only see what its windows let him see, even though he can decide to transform his dwelling.

As Heidegger tells us, language is "the house of being"⁸. Man lives *in* language, he does not *use* it. It is built with signs, which are organized by man according to an architecture, but these signs also exert a considerable power on man. He is thrown into a house in his infancy, one that was built by his distant ancestors, but he is called to extend it toward the skies and to deepen its foundations into the earth.

Sanctuary

An **altar** is a sacred precinct within a house, but when an altar grows in size and in importance, and when it is joined with other sacred spaces that are found in a land, the union of all these spaces forms a Sanctuary.

A Sanctuary may be spread across different houses, and even be composed of different houses, but contrary to the personal altar present in any house, which is only served by its dwellers, the Sanctuary attracts a throng of pilgrims, who come from afar in order to behold the sacred structure. It welcomes all those who

⁸ Martin, and David Farrell Krell. *Basic Writings*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993: 217. Print. (Letter on humanism); Original German: "das Haus des Seins," from: GA 9: 313.

are thirsting for the sacred, its doors wide open to be seen and served by all men.

Skies

Man is used to see the skies in their everydayness, as the blue dome under which he stands. The poetic essence of the skies is nonetheless intricately intertwined with what they allow: movement, and foremost the passing of time. As the German philosopher reminds us, they are: “the vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the year’s seasons and their changes, the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and inclemency of the weather, the drifting clouds and blue depth of the ether.”⁹ The skies are the ground of all grounds, the space that opens up the possibility for other spaces to emerge. They came before everything else, and even the earth, the ground of man’s being, rests upon them.

When man raises up his eyes toward them, he is given more to behold than a canvas filled with various hues. He is given to witness the passing of the days and seasons, the signs of the times to come and the remnants of the creation’s most distant past. The skies represent more than the technical “space-time:” they are what encompasses all, all places and all ages, past, present and future.

⁹ Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001: 147. Print; Original German: “Der Himmel ist der wölbende Sonnengang, der gestaltwechselnde Mondlauf, der wandernde Glanz der Gestirne, die Zeiten des Jahres und ihre Wende, Licht und Dämmer des Tages, Dunkel und Helle der Nacht, das Wirtliche und Unwirtliche der Wetter, Wolkenzug und blauende Tiefe des Äthers.” From: GA 7: 151.

Village

Man begins his life in a solitary home, oblivious to what lies beyond its walls. When the existence of other houses is revealed to him, he may decide to step out of his home to visit his neighbors, and he may then begin to create friendly bonds with them. These friendships may lead to cooperation and ex-changes between neighbors, and finally to the creation of a community.

The village thus represents a community of houses located on a common land. Its dwellers may live as recluses in their home, but they may also take part in the life of the village, which has the potential of enlarging their horizon through the dis-covery of other dwellings and of their inhabitants, who lived in a world significantly different from their own.

Wall

The walls of the house are what separates it from the outside, the countr-y that is the fruit of nature rather than the product of the hands of man. They represent the extent of man's territory and the line showing the progress of his building work.

The walls are also a privileged location for man: it is by standing on them that he may become conscious of the limits of his home. It offers him a view of the wilderness that he intends to conquer, the field where his future constructions will be built and where his future battles will be waged.

The walls are also a place where the house or the city are harder to distinguish from the

countr-y, as they separate both as well as they join them. They therefore are an ideal location for man to appropriate the nature of what is found on either of their sides.

World

The concept of world is so familiar to us that most will fail to discern it from several other concepts: the universe, the earth, the creation etc. Contrary to these other terms, however, the “world” is not something that can be observed objectively by any man. The concept of “world” is fundamentally meta-physical, and it is therefore estranged from the absolute and objective nature of the earth and the skies. It represents the way we conceptualize the creation and organize it in terms of meaningful signs, concepts. More than this:

The world is not the mere collection of the countable or uncountable, familiar and unfamiliar things that are just there. But neither is it a merely imagined framework added by our representation to the sum of such given things. The world worlds, and is more fully in being than the tangible and perceptible realm in which we believe ourselves to be at home. The world is never an object that stands before us and can be seen.¹⁰

¹⁰ From: Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001: 43. Print; Original German: “Welt ist nicht die bloße Ansammlung der vorhandenen abzählbaren oder unabzählbaren, bekannten und unbekannten Dinge. Welt ist aber auch nicht ein nur eingebildeter, zur Summe des Vorhandenen hinzu vorgestellter Rahmen. Welt weitet und ist seiender als das Greifbare und Vernehmbare, worin wir uns heimisch glauben. Welt ist nie ein Gegenstand, der vor uns steht und angeschaut werden kann,” from:

The world, and the house of being sheltering it, is the dwelling of man. As different men, different times, and different cultures conceptualize the creation in various manners, we may nonetheless more accurately speak of *worlds* rather than of a single *world*.

A world thus can be seen as a metaphysical realm, but it is nonetheless important to recognize that this realm is not a Platonic realm of ideas separate from the earth, located outside of time and space: the world is itself to be found on the surface of the earth, under the skies, in all the “things” that surround us and that are fully part of it. As Heidegger tells us:

World and earth are essentially different from one another and yet are never separated. The world grounds itself on the earth, and earth juts through world . . . The earth cannot dispense with the Open of the world if it itself is to appear as earth in the liberated surge of its self-seclusion. The world, again, cannot soar out of the earth’ s sight if, as the governing breadth and path of all essential destiny, it is to ground itself on a resolute foundation.¹¹

If the world floats away, it loses its meaning

GA 5: 30–31.

¹¹ From: Ibid.^t: 47–48; Original German: “Welt und Erde sind wesentlich voneinander verschieden und doch niemals getrennt. Die Welt gründet sich auf die Erde, und Erde durchragt Welt . . . Die Erde kann das Offene der Welt nicht missen, soll sie selbst als Erde im befreiten Andrang ihres Sichverschließens erscheinen. Die Welt wiederum kann der Erde nicht entschweben, soll sie als waltende Weite und Bahn alles wesentlichen Geschickes sich auf ein Entschiedenenes gründen,” from: GA 5: 35–36.

and the earth is thereby condemned to remain unseen, as only through the world can man see and grasp the creation. This is why the poetic sense of this word is not disconnected from its “usual” meaning: a world is both what is found between the earth and the skies, the place where man lives and work, and the way that man cuts out the universe into a set of “things” that he organizes according to his will.

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